





Harry H. Hughes.



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LENA ;

OR,

THE SILENT WOMAN.

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LENA ;
OR,
THE SILENT WOMAN.

BY THE
AUTHOR OF "KING'S COPE," "MR WARRENNE,"
&c., &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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LENA;

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CHAPTER I.

On our dim and distant shore
Aching love is felt no more ;
We have loved with earth's excess,
Past is now that weariness ;
We have wept that weep not now,
Calm is now that throbbing brow ;
We have known the dreamer's woes,
All is now one bright repose.

MRS HEMANS.

It was a calm, clear evening, towards the end of May ; and on the lawn of one of the prettiest little villas near Richmond, a lady and gentleman with two children had been tempted by the beauty of the night, and the name rather

22
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M^{rs} Langdon 16 Sept. 53

than the temperature of the spring, to loiter down to the water's edge and watch the boats returning to the city.

The moon, bright with that cold, silvery radiance that belongs only to nights from which the frost has not quite departed, was mounting slowly to the tops of the dark cedars that skirted the garden, and touched with light the low parapet that divided the lawn from the river.

"I do not know whether we are very wise," said Mrs Fleming, as she leaned on her brother's arm, "but it is impossible to go in while those singers are within hearing." A boat was slowly floating down the tide, and the rowers were singing a glee as they rested on their oars.

"How bright the moon shines!" said the eldest girl; "I wonder if papa can see the moon where he is?"

"Papa is in India, my love," said her mother; "and there it is day, when it is night with us."

"When we are older, we shall go to India too," said Cecil, resolutely.

“Do you remember papa, my little Laura?” said Mrs Fleming, stooping down to her younger girl.

“No, mamma; but I remember when we went to Hampton Court in the boat last year, and had strawberries and cream at the inn.”

“Ay,” said her uncle Ned, “that’s a good deal more to the purpose.”

“Is it not very odd, Ned, that the mail is not in?” said Mrs Fleming.

It was during the Burmese war; and to those who had relatives in India, the arrival of the mail was a serious affair. “You cannot fail to hear in a few days,” said Mr Morland. “I know they are expecting despatches at the Horse Guards.”

“They have a right to the earliest information, no doubt,” said Mrs Fleming; “but if the right were to be measured by the anxiety, I think I should put in my claim.”

“I say, Cecilia, what’s the meaning of that cough?” asked Mr Morland.

“Nothing new, Ned,” said Mrs Fleming; “but perhaps we had better go in—I am expecting Lady John to drink tea with me.”

They sauntered towards the house: a bright fire glowed and flickered through the light muslin curtains, that hardly veiled the French windows.

“See how we are obliged to mix the seasons,” said Mrs Fleming; “actually a fire in May.”

“Why, we have hardly got rid of the snow,” said Mr Morland. “It’s not a month ago—is it, Cis?—that you threw the snowball at the parson, and knocked off his hat.”

“Oh! uncle, you know very well I meant it for you,” cried Cecil; “it was all your fault, starting back just as you came up to the steps.”

“I’m sure she will never do it again,” said Mrs Fleming, gently.

“I’m not so sure of that,” said Mr Morland; “but I hope he has got over it by this time.”

“I don’t think he has forgiven me,” said

Cecil; "and I told him how sorry I was: I made so sure it would have hit *you*."

"Well, I hope that will teach you how to throw snowballs again," said her uncle, as they gathered round the fire "Your cousins, the little Morlands, would never dream of such a thing."

"I'm sure I want to hear nothing about the little Morlands," cried Cecil; "odious girls!"

"Why odious?" asked her uncle.

"Because you set them up as patterns for Laura and me," said Cecil.

"Not I. I know very little about them: I only know they never assaulted me with snowballs, and never, to my knowledge, got into a boat without leave, and drifted down as far as Putney"

"Oh! uncle, that was two years ago!" cried Cecil, blushing.

"I dare say they are so proud because their father is a lord," lisped Laura.

"Well, so was my father, if you come to that," said Mr Morland, laughing.

"And you are proud in your way, uncle," said Cecil.

"Well, then, what do you blame the girls for, if we are all alike?" said Mr Morland.

"Because I hate them," replied Cecil.

"Well, that's quite reasonable, to hate people you have never seen," he returned.

Mrs Fleming, who had been busied in making the tea, now came forward to greet her friend, Lady John Dawbeney, who was announced :

"So kind in you to come! I hope you do not find the fire too much?"

"The very thing I was wishing for at home, but Lord John can't bear it. Mr Morland here? I hope Cecilia duly prizes your kindness in sparing her an evening during the very height of the season."

"He spares me so many, that I don't prize them enough," said Mrs Fleming, looking affectionately at her brother.

The tea was cleared away; Lady John took up Mrs Fleming's embroidery.

"You industrious creature!" she said, "I

have brought you the pattern of the ottoman you admired so much.

“Cis is working me a door-mat for my chamber,” said Mr Morland.

“Indeed I am not, uncle Ned ; it is a beautiful flower-stand.”

“Uncle Ned, will you play at dominoes with me ?” cried Laura.

“I ’m so sorry : but I don’t know the game,” he said.

“We will teach you,” exclaimed Cecil ; “Laura and I against you.”

“I shall not have a chance,” he said, sitting down to their little table.

“Town is very full, Mr Morland,” said Lady John.

“Fuller than usual, I think,” he said.

“Uncle Ned, a six—you must play a six,” cried Cecil, recalling his attention.

“Run, Cis, and bring a log of wood from the hall,” said her uncle, “it ’s not worth while to ring.”

Cecil disappeared, and came in laden with logs.

"For you

Am I this patient log-man."

quoted Mrs Fleming, smiling.

"What's all that noise outside?" said Mr Morland, pausing in his occupation of mending the fire.

The loud ringing of the bell at the lodge was followed by the clattering of a horse's hoofs on the gravel.

"An orderly, by Jove!—news from the Horse Guards!" cried Mr Morland, hurrying from the room.

"Emily," whispered Mrs Fleming, turning quite white, and making a sign with her hand that the children should leave the room.

"Dearest Cecilia, don't agitate yourself," said Lady John; "Colonel Fleming is so fortunate a man, I anticipate the best news."

"Cecil, darling, take Laura up stairs," faltered her mother.

Cecil, trembling with some indistinct fear, obeyed in silence.

"A letter!—it's for me, Ned, let me see it!" cried Mrs Fleming, rising, but standing spell-bound, like one in a dream.

He gave it her, and stood by her side, supporting her.

"I can't make out—the man knows nothing; but there's been an engagement," he said, in reply to Lady John's look of inquiry.

Mrs Fleming tore the letter open, and ran it over with the wild eagerness of one whose life hung in the balance.

She was leaning on her brother's shoulder. She swayed on one side, and sank on the couch beyond him. He had read the tidings—Colonel Fleming was dead!

"Oh, Heaven! how will she bear it?" said Lady John, going to her.

"Cecilia, for your children's sake take courage," said her brother, raising her in his arms.

"If she would but weep," said Lady John, looking with anxiety at her pale calm face.

"It's not worth while," she said faintly; and she remained silent, pressing her handkerchief to her lips. She knew—all know when the angel comes, and the chill and the shadow of his wings fall upon them—she knew she was to die, and that tears were for those who were left behind.

"Mr Morland, look!" cried Lady John in alarm.

"My God!" he exclaimed, perceiving his sister's handkerchief saturated, "she has burst a blood-vessel!"

He rang and gave his orders in an instant—the maids came in to carry their mistress up stairs.

"My children, Ned!" she said, with a struggle for utterance.

"Hush, Cecilia! We have understood each other all our lives: I know what you would say. Don't speak—give yourself a chance," he said, in great agitation.

"I'll go and send the nurse," said Lady John, hurrying up stairs.

“Mrs Freeman,” she said, in a low voice, “will you go to Mrs Fleming? She is taken very ill. I will stay with the children.”

Cecil rushed towards the door. Lady John stopped her gently.

“Mamma! What’s the matter with mamma?” she cried. She beat her hands together—she sank down, trying to escape from her hold.

“No, dear; not to-night,” said Lady John, drawing her back. “Mamma is taken a little faint, that is all; she must not be disturbed.”

“Let me go!” cried Cecil, straining to the door—“I’ll not disturb her—I’ll only go to see her.”

“I’ll speak to Dr Merrington presently,” said her Ladyship, “and if he thinks it right, you shall go.”

“What’s it all about?” asked Laura.

The nurse came in at this moment all in tears.

“Now you will go to bed with Mrs Freeman, like good children,” urged Lady John. “The shock, you know,” she whispered, to the nurse

—"Colonel Fleming was killed in the last engagement;—but she always had a weak chest."

It was pitiable to see Cecil straining, with eager eyes and parched lips, to catch these whispers. Something about her father—*that* she heard—but she did not remember him very distinctly. All her anguish was for her mother.

"Oh, tell me—mamma—what's the matter? will she die?" She asked in such a piercing accent, that Lady John was quite melted.

"No, dear, we all hope not; indeed, if you like to come with me for a minute, you shall—only you must not speak."

"I won't—I'll do just as you tell me," faltered Cecil.

Mrs Fleming was on the bed only half-undressed. They had removed the stains, and her white dressing-gown was unsullied. Mr Morland was seated by her pillow, the doctor standing near.

“Remember, madam, not a word,” said the doctor.

Cecil crept to the bed, and nestled her head by her mother’s side. Mrs Fleming drew her hand once or twice feebly over her child’s hair, and then turned her eyes upon her brother with a world of silent entreaty in her gaze.

He bent over her, and replied by a few whispered words.

Lady John led Cecil gently away. At the threshold the child turned, drinking in with one long eager look her mother’s placid face, dimmed like a mirror with the breath of the great Destroyer.

“What did the soldier come for?” asked Laura; gazing with more curiosity than emotion at Cecil’s face, all stained with tears.

“Hush!—mamma is ill,” she whispered.

Laura, always good-natured, and shrugging her dimpled shoulders to keep up her loosened drapery, found one of her sugar plums, and held it to Cecil’s mouth; pouted a little when

her sister shook her head at the offering, and then dropped at Mrs Freeman's knees to say her evening prayer.

Neither Lady John nor the nurse could restrain their tears when she came to the simple petition for her "papa and mamma."

As Cecil could not articulate a single word, but only wrung her hands and gazed upwards in mute despair, she was put to bed at once, and Lady John wished her good night with a promise that she should see her mamma again to-morrow.

"To-morrow" the mother was in heaven.

CHAPTER II.

MRS F.—I threw down
My fortunes at his feet ; he did not marry me
For love's sake, nor for pity ; but for love
Of that I had.

ROWLEY.

THE Hon. Mrs Fleming, a beautiful young woman of condition, had been so perverse as to form an attachment to a man beneath her in family and connexions, but suited to make her happy in every other respect. The match had been vehemently opposed by her relations ; and, as young ladies sometimes did in those days, she had run away.

Even after the death of her parents, her eldest

brother, Lord Morland, more from indolence than resentment, had taken no steps to renew the intercourse between them, and had appeared to remember the past with bitterness, when in fact he had nearly forgotten all that had happened.

Mrs Fleming, on her side, with a touch of pride that had its origin in a feeling that her husband was undervalued, shrank from expressing the slightest wish for a reconciliation. The little Flemings, therefore, and their cousins, Lord Morland's children, were perfect strangers to each other; and as Colonel Fleming was in command of a regiment, and his family moving about the country from one large town to another, it would have been difficult for the two families to have seen much of each other, even had it been desired. The only one of her friends who had stood by Mrs Fleming throughout, had been her youngest brother, Edward; between whom and herself there had always subsisted that affection which may be often observed

between the two younger ones of a family, when their brothers and sisters are a good many years older than themselves.

Of all these elder brothers and sisters none now remained but Lord Morland, in whose favour, perhaps, little could be said, but that he was a good-natured, careless person. Lord Morland had indeed as little right as inclination to feel very keenly the connexion his sister had formed, for he had himself married a person from the lower classes of society.

Lady Morland was the daughter of a tradesman, and had laid out her hundred thousand pounds on a coronet that many people thought not quite worth the purchase; for Lord Morland was notoriously on the turf, and his estates were crippled almost past redemption.

But her ladyship had a vocation for rising in the world, and she had cleverly worked herself into a position very gratifying to her vanity. She did not attempt to be a leader of fashion: indeed, very early in her career, she had met

with some rude affronts from women of high birth that had taught her discretion ; but she established for herself a reputation, such as carries great weight in this country : that of a most estimable woman,—an admirable mother, and a wife beyond all praise. For she always spoke *of* Lord Morland with interest or commendation, and *to* him without a shadow of reproach for his follies and losses. She was looked up to by a large circle of country neighbours ; consulted, respected, and visited by people who would never have spoken to her when she lived with her father at Clapham. She was too clever to be unreasonable in her aims, and she accomplished them all. She possessed a flow of language rarely granted to persons of obscure derivation ; and although she made, sometimes, very curious blunders in her little French quotations, she spoke English like a gentlewoman. She always had a sentiment, and sometimes a text, ready for every contingency, and therefore was esteemed a person of eminent talents and inex-

haustible piety ; whereas she was but an unscrupulous, good sort of woman.

Mr Edward Morland thought very well of his sister-in-law, and rather admired her person (which was, perhaps, the plainest you ever saw) : as did most other men ; for she had a knack of flattering the sex in a way that seldom failed to reach their hearts ; and she had many sterling qualities, though not exactly all to which she pretended. He would have liked her less had he known that she carefully avoided putting Lord Morland in mind that he had a sister ; the only step necessary to have made him very willing to be reconciled to Mrs Fleming. For Lady Morland had a great dread of dividing what little interest she might possess over her husband's heart ; and though sometimes she was compelled to share her sceptre with an opera dancer, yet that was a very different thing to having his sister running in and out of Thornley, and perhaps making herself of consequence, and giving him advice.

Mrs Fleming would have cared little for her

sister-in-law's neglect, had she even known it to have been systematic. She was too happy in her home to give a thought to anything else. Colonel Fleming was handsome, brave, and fortunate; he had risen rapidly in his profession; his private fortune was not too narrow for the comforts, even the luxuries of life; he and Mrs Fleming were cited as the happiest and most attached couple in the world.

But this sort of thing never lasts long: I do not mean the attachment, but the happiness. A few years after his marriage, Colonel Fleming's regiment was ordered to India. Mrs Fleming was eager to accompany him; but then came the question of the children: they were just at that age when it was not possible, with any chance of their living, to take them out to a tropical country. Her brother advised her to take a villa at Richmond, and settle there till Colonel Fleming could procure an exchange; or, at the worst, till they could all go out to him together, without danger to the children from

the climate. It was at this villa that she was presented to the reader, on the evening that made her a widow, and her children motherless.

A week had passed ; then came a day when the windows were all thrown open, and the two children, in their black frocks, were led into the drawing-room.

A gentleman dressed in deep mourning was standing with his back to the fire ; he had a bald head and a peaked beard, looking—though quite unconsciously—like the Chandos portrait of Shakspeare : the same splendid eyes, the same bad line of mouth.

A lady was seated on the sofa, short, swarthy, with one eye bigger than the other, as black as crape and cachmere could make her.

These were Lord and Lady Morland.

Mr Morland, who was standing at the window came forward and led his nieces to their uncle and aunt.

They had arrived that day : Lord Morland to attend the funeral of his sister, his lady to

enter into some arrangements about their nieces.

Lord Morland patted both the girls kindly on the head, and passed them on to Lady Morland ; who kissed them, called them poor little loves, and cried a little : or seemed to do so.

Cecil clung to her uncle Ned's hand, and would not let it go ; Laura leaned against her aunt Morland's knees, and played with the ornaments of her steel châtelaine.

Lord Morland's carriage was announced. He was going straight off to Newmarket.

“ You will settle every thing with my lady,” he said to his brother. “ I shall be delighted to agree to all you propose : let Thornley be their home—or, in fact, whatever you think best.”

Then patting his nieces again on the head, he nodded to Lady Morland and his brother, and hurried out of the room. Her ladyship then turned to contemplate the little orphans, with the speculative eye of one who already looked

forward to the chances of the matrimonial market.

Cecil was eleven years old, tall for her age, with that supple grace in all her movements which is said to distinguish the Andalusian women. Her complexion was so rich, that she sometimes, at the first glance, was mistaken for a brunette, from the warm glow on her velvet cheek; though her skin was of the most pearly whiteness, her hair light brown with a golden gloss, and her long laughing eyes of the deepest blue. Her nose was straight, her lips full, curved, and crimson, and her little chin dimpled, as if a fairy's finger had touched it at her birth. She appeared to strangers reserved and haughty, drawing up her beautiful little pillar of a neck, and half closing her deeply fringed eyelids, with an air of frigid disdain. But with her companions all this pride vanished: she was generous, warm-hearted, and only too much of a romp for modern fashions.

Laura was two years younger than her sister,

and much more slender in her proportions, with a face so delicate that it looked like an exquisite carving in ivory, with large eyes of the deepest blue, and a profusion of rich brown hair. She was quite a Morland, as her aunt told her, and Cecil altogether a Fleming. But it was on record that Laura had never given up a single thing she liked, nor done what she did not like, for any human creature: and it would be well for society if the Morlands were the only family in which that peculiarity might be found.

Cecil's beauty was clouded by tears and fasting; but enough remained to show Lady Morland what she was likely to turn out. Laura, who had revelled all the past week in a double share of pudding and dessert, was fresh and blooming as ever.

"Ah! dearest Edward," exclaimed Lady Morland, when the children were withdrawn, "we know *who* tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."

Mr Morland could not follow his sister-in-

law's flights of fancy at any time: he did not see how his warmly clad little nieces deserved the epithet she had bestowed on them. But he was anxious that they should be under her care; and, aware that he must accept a certain number of moral sentences before she came to the point, he armed himself with patience, slid from the mantelpiece to the sofa, and like an angler waited quietly for her to come to the surface.

"I did think that Lady John would have insisted on claiming these dear orphans," she said pensively: "but this only shows us the value of all earthly friendships."

"If you want to know the key to her friendship for Cecilia, I can tell you," he said: "two of her boys are meant for the army, and Fleming was a rising man: he would have made one of them his aid-de-camp."

"I never like to think the worst of my fellow-creatures," said Lady Morland, with a sigh; "we are all frail beings. And, talking of boys, there's my Basil——"

“I don’t know in what sense Basil is plural,” remarked Mr Morland, half aside, “except that he has vice enough for half-a-dozen.”

“I mean in case of any attachment being formed between the cousins,” said Lady Morland.

“Deuced unfortunate—for the girls,” said Mr Morland in soliloquy.

“Ah! you do not see my Basil as he really is,” said Lady Morland, “because he has a high spirit.”

“A low spirit I should call it,” said Mr Morland: “by your own showing he is seldom out of the stable.”

“And can you wonder, when you know his poor father’s habits?” said Lady Morland.

“I don’t wonder in the least—I merely remark it,” said Mr Morland: “only I don’t mean that Basil shall marry one of my wards.”

“A most excellent, conscientious guardian they will have!” exclaimed Lady Morland with fervour. “Colonel Fleming knew in what hands he left his children. Such judgment!—such

kindness ! For though, my dear Edward, you are a little fond of play—”

“I wish I had been a *little* fond of it,” he answered, carelessly : “but that’s over now.”

“Indeed ! I rejoice to hear it : and when has this happy change taken place ?” asked her ladyship.

Mr Morland’s thoughts went back one week, to the “dim chamber” where his sister’s dying look had commended her child to his care ; but as he never exposed his feelings, he replied only by his slight ironical laugh, and changed the subject.

“I had a letter to-day from Mr Fleming, the colonel’s brother, full of kindness and liberality” he said : “both Mr and Mrs Fleming earnestly desire to adopt the children.”

“Oh, Edward ! those Flemings ! I am sure that you, who are so perfect a gentleman, will never consent to that,” she exclaimed. “Who and what is Mr Fleming ?”

“A merchant, if you please ; and a man for

whom I have a great regard : he is also one of the richest men in the city."

"Far be it from me to say anything disparaging to mercantile pursuits," said Lady Morland; "indeed you may have heard that my own dear father was, in his early days, connected with something of that nature. (He had been an ironmonger). But still Providence has permitted different grades to exist in society, and it is not for us to interfere with the arrangement. Lord Morland's nieces should be under his roof."

"One of two things," said Mr Morland, coolly; "either I hand over the children to the Flemings, or I place them with you. Their lawyer will do all that is proper in the way of finance; they are not beggars: they have above a thousand a-year between them."

"Of course we take them: that is settled. Thornley is their natural home," said Lady Morland.

"When I say you take them," continued Mr

Morland, I mean for the present—for the next few years: when your girls come out, of course they turn out.”

“Oh!” said Lady Morland, with her little candid laugh, “let us hope there is room enough in the world for all the four cousins.”

“In the world, perhaps, but not in your drawing-room,” replied Mr Morland. “My affairs you know are not very flourishing at present, and I can’t live at Scarbrook—in fact it’s let; but before these children are old enough to need it, I hope to have it in my power to offer them a permanent home.”

This matter being adjusted, Lady Morland returned to Thornley; leaving her brother to follow with the children as soon as he had arranged some few pressing affairs.

Cecil was not at all satisfied with the news that she and Laura were to go and live with their aunt Morland. She had that dislike to whatever is insincere which every one has experienced in times of affliction, and which children feel without being able to define.

“She will be very kind to you, Cecil,” said her uncle: “she is a very excellent woman.”

“And my cousins, uncle, what are they like?”

“They are not pretty, but I should not think them hard to live with: the eldest perhaps a little haughty; the youngest stupid, and therefore mischievous. Always be on the look-out with a stupid woman, for she will do you an ill-turn from sheer inability to do anybody a good one.”

“And my cousin Basil, uncle?”

“Take care you have as little as possible to say to Basil. When you are older, I will explain to you why and wherefore.”

“Yes, uncle: I wish I was older.”

“Ah, we are all of us very wise: I wonder what we expect that Time will bring us in his wallet.” “Well, Simpson?”

The butler came in to say that a man had been despatched from Thornley, and desired to speak with Mr Morland.

“Show him in,” said Mr Morland. “What can be the matter there, I wonder?”

An old man, with picturesque silver hair, made his appearance ; very simple and rustic in his manner, with the air of being perfectly at home in any society.

“ Well, John, take a chair : anything wrong at Thornley ? ” said Mr Morland.

“ Well, Mr Edward,” said John, leaning on his stick, “ Mr Basil have run away.”

Cecil started, and looked at her uncle, who merely gave a low whistle, and waited for farther information.

“ So, Mr Edward,” pursued John, leisurely, “ my lady sent me off to you directly, being as how she was too distracted to write.”

“ Yes, I know she always is, when anything happens,” said Mr Morland : “ and so—”

“ So she begs you will send the young misses to Thornley along of me, and go straight after Mr Basil yourself,” said John.

“ Well, but which way am I to go, John ? ”

“ Why, sir,” said John, sitting down, and gently depositing his hat upon the floor, as a pre-

liminary to a long gossip, "Dr Fell do say he be gone with the gipsies."

"Very amusing!—North or south, eh, John?"

"Why, Mr Ned, that 's more than I know; but this I do know, he be gone as far as ever he can from Dr Fell."

"A nice young gentleman, on my word!"

"Be n't he, Mr Ned? To be sure he do ride Brown Bess like an angel."

"Brown Bess is the better angel of the two, to my mind, John. But about Mr Basil: when did you miss him?"

"Why, sir, this morning at breakfast. Dr Fell he came to my lady in a mortal fright: but I know'd Mr Basil wouldn't go on quiet for long, for he says to me only yesterday, 'John, I'm not going to stand much more of Dr Fell: if I do, may I be d——d': begging the young lady's pardon, Mr Edward."

"And what had Dr Fell done to him, pray?"

"Oh! I don't know, Mr Ned; but he was always a-teaching of him something or other."

“Well, that was aggravating : however, John, my lady must be obeyed. While you go and refresh yourself, the young ladies shall get ready to return with you ; and I shall not show myself at Thornley till I have discovered the retreat of Mr Basil. Come, Cecil, we must bustle about; we have only two hours, when we thought to have two days.”

“Going without you, uncle !” said Cecil, beginning to cry.

“Oh ! if you mind it, I’ll go with you, and start from Thornley after this confounded boy, instead of from here.”

Cecil threw herself into his arms.

“Well, now, cheer up. Tell Miss Laura to pack her dolls and her gingerbread, and to make haste about it; and, Cecil, as you are going to live among strangers, I’ll give you a piece of advice—a thing I am not in the habit of scattering about : for people are very easily persuaded to bad ; but persuade them to good, and they set up their backs like a camel.”

“ Yes, uncle.”

“ Be silent and straightforward, and you will have two weapons in your hands, of which you will know the value by and bye. Now, run after Laura, child, and make your adieu to Mrs Freeman.”

In two hours the carriage was announced; their uncle lifted them in, and before Cecil had raised her tearful face from his shoulder, they were out of sight of their old home.

CHAPTER III.

Those that live single take it for a curse, !

Or doe things worse ——

Some would have children, those that have them mone,

Or wish them gone.

LORD BACON.

LADY MORLAND received them very kindly. Although she was in great anxiety about her son, she was sufficiently collected to make them welcome ; and uncle Ned, as he set out on what he termed “a sleeveless errand,” had the satisfaction of seeing them comfortably seated round the fire, chattering to their aunt as if they had known her for years.

“ Well now, my loves,” said Lady Morland,

rising, "we will go into the study, and you shall make the acquaintance of your little cousins."

Cecil's deep eyelids descended, with her most freezing look; she had imbibed the notion that her cousins looked down upon her, for she had somehow or other heard it whispered that her mother was thought to have married beneath her station.

There was nothing prepossessing in the first aspect of the honourable young ladies. They were very little for their age. Louisa was dark and sallow, with a very large hooked nose, and a long chin. Henrietta, still more sickly-looking, with light hair, and the lower part of her face protruding like an ape.

"I'm glad I am *not* a Morland," was Cecil's thought, as she contrasted her own features with those of her little cousins.

Louisa was playing something very brilliant with all the force of her little thin arms; Henrietta, hanging over a slate in an agony of stupefaction. They were a little worse off than the

hardest worked factory girl ; inasmuch as the brain is the most delicate organ that can be overworked : but it is a consoling fact, that some people's brains, like their hands, will become callous from hard labour, and then there is not so much harm done.

“My dear girls, come and welcome your cousins to Thornley,” said Lady Morland : “I am sure you will be very good friends. Miss Penley will give you a holiday to become acquainted.” Then gently impelling the two Flemings a little more into the room, she nodded to Miss Penley, and withdrew.

Louisa and Henrietta had risen when their mamma spoke to them, and now advanced a step or two forward, with the most listless indifference expressed upon their countenances.

Miss Penley had stolen out of the room to learn if it were really her ladyship's pleasure that so many precious hours were to be wasted in cultivating her pupils' feelings, instead of their finger ends—a fact she could not believe without confirmation.

Meantime Cecil and Laura stood hand in hand near the door, while Lou and Hen, as they were called, stared fixedly at them, without speaking. It might safely be said that no girls with good hearts would so have received their orphan cousins. But Cecil had not been her uncle Ned's companion for nothing: she was not to be easily daunted. She surveyed her puny cousins from head to foot, and then moving towards the table, with her stately undulating walk, she drew a chair for Laura, and one for herself, and pulling towards her a book of engravings, began to turn them over. Lou and Hen exchanged glances.

“What's your name?” asked Lou, moving a little nearer to Cecil.

“Mine?” asked Cecil, regarding her cousin through her half-closed lids.

“Yours—if one may be so bold,” said Lou.

“Cecil Fleming,” she replied, in a steady tone.

“Are you come to live here?” asked Lou.

“That depends, in a measure, on how you behave,” returned Cecil.

Louisa turned to Hen with an astonished countenance; but Hen and Laura were amicably seated at the little work table, making acquaintance fast.

“Your uncle is a merchant, is not he?” said Lou.

“Yes—do you know what your grandfather was?”

“My grandfather, Lord Morland, was in the army.”

“Your mother’s father—Fletcher, the iron-monger? because *he* was *not* a merchant.”

Lou’s pale face grew paler; but though she could say any rude thing, she was not great in repartee: her indignation was speechless. But the disputes of children, when not meddled with by their elders, usually come to nothing; and people who wish them well had better always let them fight their own battles, and not try to reconcile them, as most teachers do, by proving them both in the wrong.

The next morning Cecil and Laura were duly

put upon the treadmill with their two cousins, and they fell at once into the monotonous course of life observed at Thornley.

Lady Morland, when deprived of her husband's society, led a very secluded life: very seldom having any company, dining early with the children, and assembling them with their tutor and governess in the drawing-room every evening; where they worked, read, and played the harp and piano until they separated for the night. There was a recess at the end of the large drawing-room, where stood a table appropriated to the girls, and covered with all kinds of gay fabrics. Lady Morland, with her arm-chair and taper by the fireside, usually read to herself; Miss Penley presided at the piano; and the pompous Dr Fell, now deprived of his pupil, sometimes played at backgammon with the nervous Hen; but generally, as soon as tea was over, he retreated to the library.

It was upon the third evening of their stay at Thornley, as the girls were working and talking

apart, Miss Penley racking the poor piano, and Lady Morland gently dozing, when the door was thrown open, and the butler's sonorous voice announced "Mr Morland, and Mr Edward Morland!"—

Mr Morland being the Basil, whose absence might be supposed to have cast a shade over the family circle.

Lady Morland woke up, Miss Penley stole out of the room, Cecil made a little friendly sign to her uncle Ned, Laura stared at Basil, and the Miss Morlands raised their heads for a moment, and then went on with their netting.

Basil, then about fourteen, was decidedly better looking than his sisters. He had a profusion of yellow hair, a complexion soft as velvet—though deeply dyed red and brown from exposure to weather—a straight nose, dark hazel eyes, and that Italian badness about the mouth, which disfigures the faces of most subordinate figures in pictures of the Roman school: a mouth expressive of malice and selfishness.

He now followed his uncle into the room, gloriously sulky, and carefully avoiding to look any body in the face.

Mr Edward Morland, therefore, shook hands with his sister-in-law; and observing that his nephew did not follow his example, but remained obstinately gazing at the furniture, mentioned Lady Morland to him, as if she had been a stranger; and Basil, surprised into civility by the irony of the introduction, muttered something like a salutation to his mother.

“Your cousin, children,” said uncle Ned to the two Flemings: “when he’s clean, he will be glad to shake hands with you.”

Basil cast his eyes upon the girls with a savage scowl, but coloured scarlet at his uncle’s sarcasm.

Lady Morland was an anxious but not an affectionate mother: she looked on her recovered treasure without the least inclination to clasp him to her heart; but bent her eye-glass attentively on his untidy figure: particularly his hair,

which was tangled, and garnished liberally with straws.

“We have had a little run into Notts,” said uncle Ned, leaning back comfortably in his arm-chair. “We were found on the borders of the Walbeck forest, doing a bit of Robin Hood. I believe I saved the heir-apparent from the constables: he had just been helping to rob a hen-roost with great success.”

Lady Morland had unfolded her transparent handkerchief by this time.

“You must imagine my gratitude to you, my dearest Edward,” she said: “I’m sure I cannot put it into words. And how to act with this rebellious boy I know not. I look to you for advice: for as to guessing where Lord Morland is at this present time, I might as well try to guess the longitude.”

A grin from Mr Morland, who greatly admired and envied his father’s wandering habits.

“Why, my dear Lady Morland,” replied uncle Ned; “it is simply a question of finance.

which my Hon. nephew can almost decide for himself: if he wishes to return to the gipsies, it will be easy to compute his weekly expenses, including liquor to propitiate his companions."

"Oh! Edward, do be serious!" exclaimed Lady Morland.

"If that does not exactly meet his wishes, we must learn, if we can, what will," said uncle Ned, facing his chair round towards Basil: "provided the young gentleman can be induced to speak."

"I hate Dr Fell," said Mr Morland.

"Very good: that is one point gained. I'm the last man in the world to vindicate Dr Fell; your dislike is purely historical: and, besides, John Fraser tells me, he was possessed with an insane wish to teach you something."

Basil coloured crimson again.

"We know that you don't want Dr Fell," pursued uncle Ned: "perhaps you will let us know what you *do* want?"

"I want to go to Germany," grumbled Basil.

“To be sure,” said his uncle, with ready acquiescence: “any particular part?”

“To the University,” said Basil, his colour growing deeper every minute.

“Yes; only, as there are more than one university in the nine circles,”—began uncle Ned.

But Lady Morland interrupted him.

“Germany! Good gracious, Edward, put a stop to that idea, I do entreat! He will become an atheist, a gambler, and a vulgar creature smelling of smoke and beer! I never, never will consent to that.”

“My dear Lady Morland,” said uncle Ned, looking at the young gentleman’s dogged countenance, “let us ascertain the real extent of the mischief. I think my friend’s religious views are not remarkably definite at present: he plays at pitch and toss: he drinks whatever he can get; and if I were inclined to be fastidious, I should say that the odour of tobacco would be a slight improvement upon his present condition. The chances are, that he will spend less at Göt-

tingen than at Oxford; and though I am well aware that the habits of the Burschen class are not very refined, depend upon it they are a cut above the gipsies. Add to this, that the law is no respecter of persons; and it would not be very gratifying to find the heir of Morland in the stocks, as a recompense for his assiduity on the highway."

Lady Morland called herself a miserable mother, and applied her handkerchief to her eyes; while uncle Ned, reclining in his arm-chair, played with her beautiful spaniel.

At last she said, "It is very well to talk about Germany, but the boy is not old enough to go to college anywhere; and what is to be done with him in the meantime?"

"Perhaps he will kindly tell us," said the uncle, still occupied in teasing the dog. "We can't well get on without his opinion."

"I don't want to live at home with a lot of girls," remarked Basil, casting a savage look at the recess.

“Well, there’s no accounting for tastes,” said uncle Ned, coolly. “Perhaps you would like to try Eton?”

“I don’t care if I do,” said Basil.

“In that case you must put up with Dr Fell till after the vacation: and it would not be wholly amiss if you suffered him to impart to you some slight portions of the Latin grammar; for though most people make a point of forgetting it all, yet it’s an awkward fact, that at Eton they do learn something.”

“Then I consider that arranged,” said Lady Morland; “and one day I hope that ungracious boy will look on you, Edward, as his deliverer. As for my own feelings, I can’t express them.”

“Then now, Lady Morland,” said uncle Ned, “as we seem to have got through the sensibilities of the case, perhaps you will allow me to descend in the scale of emotion, and confess myself alarmingly hungry.”

“Of course, my dear Edward: I’m shocked I did not think of it before. What will you have? There’s some excellent soup, I know.

Richards, dinner as soon as possible in the other room ; or perhaps you would be warmer here."

There was just a little more bustle about Lady Morland than if she had been genuine ; but then it was so kindly done that few men disliked it : women were more severe.

Lou's apathy had been a little roused by the scene. "Is n't it funny?" she whispered to Cecil.

"It frightens me : he looks so surly," Cecil replied.

"What a naughty boy!" exclaimed Laura.

"Yes," said Hen, "he always is. Once he tried to run away before ; but Miss Penley told of him, and that is why he hates her."

Lady Morland had sunk back exhausted in her chair.

"Are you coming, Basil?" asked uncle Ned, when his dinner was announced.

Basil cast a revengeful glance around, and followed his uncle out of the room.

CHAPTER IV.

Thilk same shepherd mought I well mark ;
He has a dog to bite or to bark :
Never had shepherd so keen a cur,
That waketh an if but a leaf stur.

SPENSER.

It was the hour for recreation at Thornley ; the girls were amusing themselves on the terrace, under the eye of Miss Penley : Cecil was playing at ball with Louisa ; and Hen, leaning upon Laura, was crawling up and down complaining of her headache.

“ Oh ! here comes Basil ! ” cried Hen ; “ let us run into the wilderness : he will set his dog at us ! ”

Laura, who was very timid, set off with her

cousin towards the shrubbery, just as Basil, followed by a huge dog, stepped through the glass doors upon the terrace.

"Upon my word, Basil," cried Louisa, "it is too bad! Mamma has forbidden you ever to bring that savage beast in the gardens."

"I advise you not to interfere with me!" growled Basil. "Here, Scamp, look out!"

"What is his name?" asked Cecil, boldly. "Scamp! he's a famous dog! Hi! Scamp!" and Cecil threw her large India-rubber ball, with all her force, along the terrace.

The dog rushed at it, and Basil looked on approvingly. Scamp brought back the ball to Cecil; but his teeth had pierced the India-rubber, and it collapsed in her hand.

"Don't you see," said Basil, "the air has escaped?—you should not have thrown it to him: a stick would have done as well."

"The air!" said Cecil, "where is it gone?"

"It has mixed with the air around us," replied Basil.

"How did they put it in?" asked Cecil.

"They inflated the ball, and then closed up the aperture," said Basil, showing her the patch at the top of the ball.

"I don't understand," said Cecil.

"Of course you don't," retorted Basil.

"Then why don't you tell me?" asked Cecil.

"I'm younger than you: there's no disgrace in not knowing."

"Well, that's true. He does not know," said Basil, pointing to Dr Fell, who was lounging along the terrace; "and I ask any one, what is the use of learning such humbug as Latin and Greek, when there are things all round us of which we are ignorant."

"Is that why you want to go to Germany?" asked Cecil.

"That's one reason: I've heard they teach natural philosophy there. Besides, that's the way to learn German; which is well worth Latin, I hope."

"But the gipsies could not teach you that," said Cecil.

Basil looked fiercely at her.

"I say the gipsies could teach you nothing," repeated Cecil, undauntedly.

"I know that," said Basil; "but I did not mean to stay with them: I only went for a lark."

"What's a lark?" asked Cecil.

"Look here," said Basil; "did you ever wish to get away and live in a desert island, and do everything for yourself, like Robinson Crusoe?"

"To be sure," said Cecil, eagerly; "once I got into a boat that I might try to find a desert island for myself, but I only drifted down the river."

"Why, you might have been lost, if a steamer had run down on you," said Basil.

"Yes, it was very foolish; but I was quite young then," said Cecil: "and, now, tell me about the air."

Miss Penley and the other girls collected to look at Basil, as he paced leisurely up and down the terrace, holding by Cecil's black tippet, and

gesticulating as he explained to her some of his favourite theories.

The dinner bell interrupted their discourse ; and then Cecil, as she went up the steps, remembered her uncle Ned's words—"Have nothing to say to Basil ;" but she thought his warning could never apply to the atmosphere : had Basil asked her to go into the stable, she would have taken care to refuse.

Lady Morland was surprised and pleased to see Basil make 'his way every evening to the girls' work-table ; sometimes with a book, in which he was very anxious to point out something to Cecil. The chair next to her was his especial property : if Lou chanced to have taken it, she would start up at his approach and run round the table ; for his wishes were not expressed in the gentlest manner, and she knew she stood a good chance of being thrown out of her seat like a sack.

Cecil was far too generous to wish to receive attention at the expense of another : she always

spoke her mind to him when he was rude to his sisters ; and once when, enraged by Hen, who had said something remarkably stupid, he had permitted himself to pull her hair, Cecil reached over and gave such a pluck at his amber locks, that he found it more prudent to restrain himself in future.

Lady Morland was rejoiced to see all this ; she knew that, even at their early age, there is something civilizing in female society ; and then when they grew older, if there should be any attachment, it would be perfectly easy to break it off : for Basil would then be old enough to understand how necessary it was that he should marry a large fortune.

The Flemings had been settled at Thornley about two months, when Lord Morland returned.

Lady Morland was apprized of the fact by the arrival of some of his horses and grooms in the morning ; but the children were kept in perfect ignorance, for she took her luncheon

with them as usual, and they did not know that a late dinner was ordered. She had a habit, which she kept up through life, of never communicating to them anything that could be kept back.

So, when they were all in the drawing-room, after their early tea, Lord Morland came in, dressed for dinner; and Cecil wondered why her cousins were not glad, or startled, or anything, but just looked up when he nodded, and then looked down again on their bead-work. Lady Morland never showed her wisdom more than by the way she received Lord Morland after an absence. If she had had a grain of affection for him she could not have done it: she would have been constrained and timid, and annoyed him much more than if she had reproached him; but Lady Morland's nerves were strong, and her feelings weak, and she got on famously.

She was seated in her usual black velvet dress; he nodded to her; she graciously stretched out her hand.

"Glad to see your ladyship looking so well," said Lord Morland.

"Thank you, I was never better ; but you always come home looking thinner, don't you?"

This pleased Lord Morland, who was inclined to be too stout ; and she knew it.

"Do I?—I'm quite well, though," he replied, "we have had such excellent weather."

"We have been in such a state of confusion since you left," said Lady Morland : "Basil ran away!"

"The deuce he did!—He will come back, I suppose, when he's tired of it," said Lord Morland, with the most perfect composure.

"Oh! he is come back, I am thankful to say," replied Lady Morland: "your dear brother found him. He certainly is the best and kindest friend in the world."

"Capital!" said Lord Morland.

"You have not seen him lately, I suppose, as you have heard nothing about it," said Lady Morland.

"No ; I am direct from Chester : I have not been in town these three weeks."

"I hope you have been fortunate," said Lady Morland.

"Never had such a run of ill luck in my life," replied Lord Morland coolly.

"You don't say so !—that is vexatious : such pains as you always take with your horses, too. I am sure you deserve to succeed," said Lady Morland, with just the proper amount of sympathy.

"You are very kind," said Lord Morland : "are those the little Dawbeneys ?"

"My dear Lord, you don't remember : your poor sister's children."

"Bless my soul ! I forgot ; I was wondering how they came to be in mourning."

Nothing could be kinder or more courteous than his manner, when he discovered them : he welcomed them to Thornley, asked after their pursuits, praised their beauty, took Laura on his knee, rallied Cecil about Basil, and talked

all the good-natured nonsense that gentlemen will talk to pretty children.

Cecil found out that evening, to her great amusement, that Lord Morland did not know his daughters' names.

"Lou, my dear," he said to Hen, "I wish you would give me the newspaper."

"My dear Lord, this is Hen," said Lady Morland, laughing; but he made the same mistake again when he spoke to Lou.

Basil seemed on better terms with his father than with the rest of his family. Lord Morland did not say a word to him about his escapade with the gipsies: indeed, he probably had forgot it by that time. He congratulated him on going to Eton, and remarked that it was there he himself acquired his liking for rowing, an exercise in which he excelled.

While his father was at Thornley, Basil did not make a pretence of attending to Dr Fell, but followed Lord Morland about the stables and gardens with great perseverance. But Lord

Morland's appearance was the signal for idleness in other quarters : Miss Penley was obliged to suspend her treadmill for a while, when he was at home ; and the very next morning he came into the study, and in the most friendly manner told her that he was come to run away with her pupils, for the strawberries were ripe, and he meant to turn them loose among the beds.

Miss Penley bowed, with a sense of injury too deep for words. Cecil ran gaily up to her uncle ; Hen raised her head from her eternal slate, misty with constant rubbing out, and smiled a little, for she liked strawberries ; but Lou was past caring for anything, and was, besides, afraid of Basil, who stood outside the door.

Basil had grown quite gallant : he gathered strawberries for Cecil as long as she would eat them, and then gathered more, that she might amuse herself by giving them to one of Lord Morland's spaniels, which had followed them into the garden.

Lord Morland looked on, highly amused. Cecil was the sort of girl he liked — beautiful, spirited, and with the keen sense of enjoyment, in which his own children were so deficient. Basil asked his father to let Cecil ride with them ; and she found herself, to her extreme delight, mounted on a very stout cream-coloured pony the next day, scampering over the country, with her uncle and cousin. It is true she had no habit, and Lady Morland did not think it necessary to get her one ; but with her garden hat, and a shawl round her feet, she enjoyed her rides full as much as if she had been better dressed. Her pony would leap like a deer, and scramble like a cat ; and, perfectly without fear, she would dash at banks and hedges, where even Lord Morland, with his beautiful *monture*, hesitated to follow. Her companions did nothing but laugh at her daring ways and quick replies.

Lord Morland grew very fond of her. His first question on entering the house was usually

“Where’s Cis?” and then she had to be summoned from her geography, or her French dictation. A word from Lady Morland would have checked these interruptions; for she had absolute command at Thornley, where Lord Morland (with some reason) seemed to consider himself as a visiter: but she was only too glad there was anything in the house to amuse him; and as for his preferring Cecil to his own daughters, she was not over fond of them herself, and it never gave her a moment’s concern.

It was no wonder that Cecil felt herself deserted by all the world, when Lord Morland went for grouse-shooting to Scotland, and Basil to Eton, and uncle Ned was cruising among the Greek isles with a friend who had a yacht.

For the next three years Cecil’s character went on forming as it could. She played the piano admirably, like any other clever girl who had flexible fingers and practised a good

deal ; and spoke French better than most women. She was inclined to despise all about her ; for her cousins were very inferior ; Lady Morland always struck her as fictitious, and Miss Penley was so servile as almost to excuse her disdain : and something within her seemed to point out that Lou, painting miniatures, and Laura playing the harp, and the decrepit Hen doing every known kind of work, was not quite all for which souls were created. She read eagerly : and in history she felt there was something connected with great names, that made life more honoured than what went on around her : faith, love, duty, were not mere words, when they led people to live and die like some of the heroes of old.

But she had to think it all through by herself : when she saw her uncle Ned, and consulted him, he used to tell her to ask the parson ; it was in vain she represented she had no parson to ask. Meantime she had learned a lesson which parsons are not ordained to impart—the excessively

small value of accomplishments (so called) to a woman. Lou, and Hen, and Laura, were daily becoming more accomplished, and yet how diminutive were their powers : they could not talk ; they could not even enjoy. The sight of them made Lord Morland yawn ; and Basil hated them, because there was something so shrivelled and paltry in their natures. Cecil had begun to find out that, to be able to think and speak to the purpose, people must read a good deal, and reflect upon it : their paint-brushes and their piano could not make them companions. Basil lent her books as well as horses ; in the holidays they were always together : in the morning riding or boating, in the evening poring over those elementary works which have brought natural philosophy within the reach of boys and girls.

Lord Morland used to laugh when he saw their heads stooping over the same book, studying acoustics, or the laws of motion, and say it was time to begin the settlements ; while Lady

Morland rejoiced that Basil was kept out of the stable, and cared very little for the means employed.

Next to riding the cream-coloured pony, Cecil's great delight was to be rowed on the canal in the wayer-boat. Basil had returned from Eton with some skill, and a great fondness for boating ; but his father could not trust him on the water with his cousin.

"It's as much as I dare do myself," he said ; "and I would not venture to row another woman for a hundred pounds in that cockle-shell : but Cis has such a figure—such a perfect balance—that the boat sits on the water like a petrel when she's in it." And indeed the fragile outrigger was so nicely poised, that it looked as if the fall of a leaf would have disturbed its equilibrium.

One day, Basil was getting the boat ready for his father, and Cecil was looking on, while Lord Morland and her uncle Ned were lounging under the trees smoking. Cecil always liked

to pick up scraps of their conversation, which sometimes turned on their acquaintance, and sometimes on persons in public life; and they would have been a little astonished now and then had they known how very much she contrived to overhear.

She heard her uncle Morland say—

“Old Axminster breaks a good deal, I think.”

“Enough to make him,” said her uncle Ned, drily.

“I wish I had as little,” said Lord Morland.

“Why he must have left the turf these twenty years :”

“And of course a man can have no other anxieties,” said uncle Ned, laughing.

“You keep up some acquaintance with his son Lord Hurstmonceaux, don’t you ?” said Lord Morland.

“Thank you ! no, not at present : he’s dead,” said uncle Ned.

“Dead ! you don’t say so ? Then what’s become of his wife ?” asked Lord Morland.

“Dead too,” replied uncle Ned, lighting his cigar.

“Bless my soul—both of them!” exclaimed Lord Morland.

“I don’t see what she could do better,” said his brother: “but she had no choice in the matter—the same fever carried them both off.”

“Ah! you see that’s what people get by going abroad,” said Lord Morland. “And what sort of a fellow is young Wrexworth?”

“I don’t enjoy his acquaintance,” said Mr Morland, “but I believe he is a roving sort of person, always at sea. The last I heard of him was his being wrecked in a speronaro on the coast of Sicily, near Syracuse; and a very narrow escape he had. His parents doted on him: but that’s not unusual with an only child.”

“What a capital thing it would have been for John Dawbeney if he had been lost,” said Lord Morland.

“Very : but my interest goes all the other way,” said uncle Ned.

“I am sure so does mine,” said Lord Morland. “I think John Dawbeney the greatest snob I ever saw : really, to see him on horseback, it’s pitiable ; and a more conceited fellow does not breathe.”

“And Lady John is worse,” said uncle Ned : “the way she has behaved to poor Cecilia’s children,—”

This was a theme on which Cecil could have listened for ever ; but they moved away farther under the trees.

“Basil,” she said, “who is old Axminster ?”

“The Duke of Axminster,” he said, “Lord John Dawbeney’s father. You would hear enough of him if you knew Charles and Augustus Dawbeney : ‘the Duke’ is never out of their mouths. We laugh at them famously at Eton.”

“And who then is Lord Hurstmonceaux ?”

“Lord Wrexworth, his grandson, is now

Lord Hurstmonceaux ; but the one they were talking of was his eldest son. Charles Dawbeney used often to wish him dead—the young one I mean ; because then, you know, he would be Duke of Axminster.”

“Now, Cis, is all ready?” asked Lord Morland, joining them.

“Yes, uncle,” said Cecil, stepping daintily into the very centre of the boat. “I hope we shall be out a long time.”

“*Bon voyage !*” said her uncle Ned.

CHAPTER V.

Besides the joys of place and birth,
The sex's paradise on earth :
A privilege so sacred held,
That none will to their mothers yield;
But rather than not go before,
Abandon Heaven at the door.

HUDIBRAS.

Two things of very little importance dwelt on Cecil's mind more than she would have been willing to allow : one, that she was, very properly, obliged to walk in and out of the room after her two cousins. She could have readily submitted to this with Louisa, who was a year older than herself; but Hen, who was a year younger, and such a miserable little creature ! Cecil's colour rose, and her eyelids fell, when

she had to follow in the wake of the Honourable Henrietta.

Her other grievance was, that Lady Morland furnished her and Laura with the shabbiest, poorest clothes that it was possible a lady's children could wear. She dressed her own children exactly in the same way : for money was an object at Thornley ; and, though the Flemings paid half their income for their maintenance and education, she was just as much disposed to save upon their funds as on her own.

Cecil had an early taste for the becoming in dress : she shuddered at the ugly bonnets and faded gowns they were compelled to put on ; and then she constantly overheard her uncle Morland praising her beauty to his brother, saying : " Upon my word, the girl walks like a reindeer ;" or, affecting to rally her on her complexion when they were caught in a shower, call out, " Take care of the rouge and the pearl powder, Cis !"

Uncle Ned used then to say, drily, that the

child was straight and healthy enough ; and Cecil used to drop her eyelids, and think that if she could but dress as she liked, she would soon show uncle Ned whether she was handsome or not.

She found that her uncle Ned's estimate of the Morland girls was perfectly correct. Louisa had that inferior pride which made her, whenever she was a little out of temper with Cecil, allude to people who had relations in trade—to merchants—as vulgar creatures ; to Mr Fleming (when she got more angry and more personal), as the man who lived in the city, and got his living by doing something low. Cecil sometimes retorted about the iron-monger, and sometimes only looked her disdain ; but there grew up in her mind a dislike—not of Lou, for, as other school-girls do, they quarrelled and made it up every day ; but—of Mr Fleming, for being her uncle and exposing her to these taunts.

For Henrietta, she was as mischievous as her

stupid little brain would allow: all her little energies were bent to that delightful end. She was sickly and uncomfortable; and it seemed a relief to her to pry into everybody's business, and to invent whatever she did not quite see or hear. Every one was constantly getting into scrapes from her tattling. She no more dared be left alone with Basil, than she dared have gone into a lion's cage; for she firmly believed he would kill her: so many tales she had told of him.

One day the prying Hen brought word into the study that she was sure uncle Ned was come. She had seen a pedlar prowling about the offices, and she had gone half-way down a forbidden staircase to observe which of the maids bought of him; and, to her great delight, the study maid had come out into the yard, and was cheapening a silk dress; when out came Ford, uncle Ned's valet, and began to pull about the pedlar's things: and so she was quite sure uncle Ned must be come.

She was quite right. Presently a message came to Cecil that she was wanted in the drawing-room; and there she found her uncle and Lady Morland conferring together.

“Oh, Cis! my dear, what an *entrée*!” exclaimed Lady Morland, as Cecil threw herself without remorse upon her uncle’s starched neckerchief. “You really are too old for that sort of thing.”

Cecil coloured crimson.

“Never mind, Cis,” said her uncle, laughing. “How old are you, though?”

“Fourteen, uncle.”

“You don’t say so! Time for you to see a little of the world, eh?”

“And your dear uncle,” said Lady Morland, “is so good as to plan a delightful little excursion for you.”

“Not me, you will understand,” said uncle Ned—“another dear uncle, whom you do not yet know: Mr Fleming, Cis, is anxious that you and his daughter should become acquainted.”

Cecil's stately neck drew back, and the long fringes of her eyes shadowed her glowing cheeks : for Lou's clumsy irony flashed into her mind.

"This visit, my dear, may lead to —— it may be of great advantage to you hereafter," said Lady Morland. "What cannot riches do? and Mr Fleming is fast becoming one of the richest men of his day."

Cecil's scornful lip curved disdainfully. Uncle Ned laughed with his ironical expression.

"You are now in possession of both sides of the question, Cis," he said : "your uncle Fleming's purse, your cousin Lena's regard. Cultivate them both."

A flash from beneath her eyelids was her only reply.

"Never let us be mercenary, my dear," added Lady Morland : "gold is a great evil. But still there is no occasion to neglect those who may be able to serve us. In a few years, Mr Fleming's society will include the best names in London."

“The long and the short of it being, Cis, how soon can you pack up your finery?” asked uncle Ned, looking at her disdainful face with a satirical smile.

Now Cecil had absolutely no finery; and at his question the whole of her shabby wardrobe passed before her mind.

She replied with her grandest air, that “Sarah could pack her things as soon as her aunt Morland pleased. Was she to set off directly?”

“Not before to-morrow morning,” replied uncle Ned; “I have two or three little things to arrange with Lady Morland meantime.”

Cecil took the hint, and swam out of the room in high dudgeon. She went up stairs, and there cried over her awkward bonnet and faded gown.

“She had rather stay at home for ever and ever, than go to the Flemings such a figure!” she said to Laura. And that horrid little *rich* Lena sneering at her old clothes! It was too

scandalous! She wondered how Lady Morland could be so stingy, and how her uncle Ned could bear to see her look such an object! Laura said it was a shame: but she seldom cared very deeply for other people's misfortunes; and it happened that she and Hen had just obtained some very neat straw bonnets, while Lou and Cecil were *affublées* with two strange coverings manufactured at home, and composed of a dingy-coloured silk.

Then Lou was very witty at dinner on mercantile subjects: tried to talk of the price of stocks; jested about figs and raisins—Mr Fleming having for many years traded in the Levant; and wondered who on earth Mrs Fleming was; until Miss Penley called her to order, and Cecil was on the point of assaulting her cousin.

Cecil was very sulky with her uncle all the evening. She had an idea, like many foolish children, that she could afflict him by her perverseness; and she was mortified that he did not seem to be aware of her treatment, but

when she wished him good night, roused himself out of his low chair, and said,

“Ah! Cis, where have you hid yourself all the evening? Good night, child!” and then fell back again, and went on playing with Finette, Lady Morland’s spaniel.

Mr Edward Morland was very intimate with Mr Fleming, and had also some business connexions with him, for he was much engaged in railway speculations: uncle Ned, who had renounced the dice, found it an easy and pleasant compromise to embark in a less objectionable game of hazard.

He arranged, then, that Cecil should spend a couple of months with the Flemings at the seaside—for they had taken a villa on the coast of Dorsetshire for the summer; since, without calculating so nicely as Lady Morland the benefits of the step, he thought it natural and pleasing that such near relations should become acquainted.

They were to start early after breakfast.

Cecil, besides the horrible bonnet, wore a black velvet spencer—with which she and Lou had been gifted from the tail of one of Lady Morland's old dress-gowns—and a skirt of silk formerly lilac. This choice attire was finished by a cheap little shawl, which further exasperated her temper; and in this frame of mind she was handed by her uncle Ned into the carriage.

As soon as they were fairly off, her uncle, looking ironically at her, said—

“So you don't like to go, Cis?”

Now Cecil was not ashamed of feeling the dislike, but she was ashamed of saying so; the colour stole over her face, and she made no reply.

“Do you recollect your father?” he said to her after a pause.

“Not very well, uncle: I remember his laugh more than anything else. When there was a dinner party, and Laura and I used to sit on the stairs and wait for the butler

to bring us sweetmeats, we used always to hear papa laughing more than the other guests."

"Speak to me of the ties of nature after that!" said uncle Ned, with his sarcastic laugh. "Who would not be a father? as the man says in the play."

"I can't help it, uncle," returned Cecil, growing very angry: "I was only six when papa went to India."

"Well, my dear, if you have any wish to refresh your memory, you will shortly have the opportunity; never were brothers more alike, or more attached, than your father and Mr Fleming."

There was a little reproach conveyed in the last part of the sentence, that Cecil felt: she coloured still more, and tried to keep the tears from coming to her eyes.

"I was always partial to your father," said uncle Ned, indifferently, "and I like this man. A very pretty kettle of fish they would have

made of it, if they had married your mother where they wished."

Cecil stamped her foot against the bottom of the carriage.

"Cold?" asked uncle Ned, carelessly.

"I'm *not* cold!" cried Cecil, bursting suddenly into tears, and as suddenly checking them. "They laugh at Mr Fleming, and they laugh at me for going to see him. You have put me among base people, and I am become base in my turn!"

"You are quite right to say what you think," said uncle Ned coolly: "if you go on to do that, you will become a remarkable woman. Now I am going to take you among people who are *not* base: although, if they teach you your catechism and prayers, and all the rest of it, at Thornley, you ought to think and act for yourself. It is of no use to accuse other people of your own blunders: it is only an idiot who would be guided by other people, thinking them base."

“And I suppose you like Lena better than me,” said Cecil, on the verge of tears again.

“No,” said uncle Ned gravely, “I like you better, Cis, than any one now living.”

Upon which Cecil threw herself headlong on his neck, and tumbled his cravat again.

“Well, then, I don’t care, uncle: *Va pour les Fleming!*” she said, brightening into smiles: “but did you ever see anything like my bonnet?”

“No, I don’t remember that I ever did,” said her uncle, surveying it with much attention.

“Is not it too bad, uncle?”

“Why, I suppose it is well enough for the seaside. Lady Morland does not care for dress,” said Mr Morland.

“I do, though,” said Cecil: “I don’t want that purse-proud little Lena to sneer at me.”

“Oh! never mind Lena,” said her uncle.

“What is she like, uncle?”

“She is an angel, Cis; but she can’t play, and sing, and the rest of it, as you do at Thornley.”

“Of course,” said Cecil, drawing up her head, “there must be a difference.”

“Ah! you have heard a great deal of nonsense talked about them all at Thornley,” said her uncle, “which I advise you not to believe.”

“I will believe nothing, uncle, except what you tell me,” said Cecil.

“Why, that will be going a little too far, Cis. I don’t make many professions of faith: but here we are at Winchester, and here I am to hand you over to the care of Mr Fleming. But first we will have a look at the cathedral.”

As they were crossing the close, they met Mr Fleming.

“You here, Fleming!” said Mr Morland; “I thought we had at least an hour before us.”

“So you have,” said Mr Fleming; “I got away from town earlier than I expected. And this is Cecil? I am delighted to see you at last, my dear; and I have a little girl waiting your arrival at home, who will be delighted still more.”

Cecil gave her hand to her uncle with more cordiality than she could have anticipated. There was a familiarity in her uncle Ned's address that raised Mr Fleming instantly in her esteem ; for she knew he never employed that tone to any one whom he did not consider a gentleman. He was a handsome man, in the prime of life, his hair just touched with gray ; and there was something that indicated a real kindness of disposition in his cordial manner, and the friendly tone of his voice. But Cecil remarked he had by no means the Morland hand and foot ; and his address wanted the calm superiority that made even the cathedral vergers bow with profound humility before her uncle Ned.

After seeing the cathedral, they went back to the hotel for luncheon ; where Cecil was fed upon raised pie and champagne, and apricot fritters ; and where it appeared that if she could have eaten gold, it would have given Mr Fleming all the greater pleasure.

At last a handsome carriage and four drove up to the door, and Mr Fleming, remarking that they had still a long journey before them, took a friendly leave of Mr Morland, made him promise to visit them in Dorsetshire, and then handed Cecil to her place with great respect.

If Mr Fleming had a weakness, it was an overweening fondness for the aristocracy; and while heartily disposed to show his niece every kindness for her own sake, he felt he could hardly be polite enough to a young lady coming direct from the august precincts of Thornley.

CHAPTER VI.

How fair her forehead is ! and that soft cheek
Wherein the bashful blood seems loath to dwell,
Lest it should stain such purity ! Her eyes
How bright, and yet how full of gentleness !
Fit lamps for such a shrine !

PLANCHÉ.

THE days were at their longest, and the sun was just setting, as the carriage reached the top of a hill overlooking a whole panorama of rocks, woods, thickets of juniper, patches of turf, and finally, the range of white cliffs that rose irregularly from the bosom of the waves. The postilions dismounted, and led their horses down the rugged way. Although the descent was steep and long, yet the villa stood much above the level of the sea ; having a slope of the short

velvet turf peculiar to the coast extending in front of the verandah ; and a rough descent of steps, formed of flat ledges of rock, making a tolerable footway from the house to the beach.

“They do not expect us till to-morrow,” said Mr Fleming, handing Cecil out. “Lena will be wild with joy.”

Lena was sitting on the edge of a table covered with hothouse flowers, which she was clipping and arranging in a jar. She was then twelve years old, fair, with that snowy delicacy of skin seen but once in an age ; yet there was a pink colour on her cheeks and the tips of her delicate fingers. Her light hair was drawn back into a net, which confined it in large silken masses, not shining : it was too soft : it had not that metallic brilliancy often seen in fair hair : it was of the palest straw colour ; her eyebrows much darker ; her eyelashes black ; her eyes gray, and soft as ground glass, large, round, and fully opened ; her forehead broad, pale, holy ; her features small ; her lips rose leaves. She

was slight as a reed ; and as she sat sideways on the table, the foot and ankle hanging down were slender almost to a fault.

“Lena!” said Mr Fleming. She threw herself off the table, and hung round his neck, and kissed his face, and hands, and dress, until Cecil felt her eyes moisten.

She thought of her own father, thrust out of sight beneath the sands of India ; and a strange passion shook her, as if she had never felt his loss—never mourned him before.

“Your cousin Cecil,” said Mr Fleming, taking her hand, when Lena’s silent welcome was spent.

Lena put her hand into Cecil’s, looked up at her with a sort of inquiring glance, and then kissed her. It is not easy to say which made the move first.

“Is mamma up stairs?” asked Mr Fleming.

Lena bent her head in assent.

He ran up stairs to find her ; the cousins were left standing together.

It must be confessed that Cecil's thoughts turned on her ugly bonnet: she was ashamed that her cousin should see her so disfigured. For Lena was dressed, though plainly, in the freshest and most becoming manner: a high, full, pink frock, with a little white collar turned over round the throat; her fragile thread stockings, bronze kid slippers, and the large Leghorn hat, with its broad, white ribbons, which lay at her feet, giving an air of elegance to her simple toilet.

"What beautiful flowers!" exclaimed Cecil, looking at the profusion with which the table was covered.

Lena took up three or four of the finest, put them together, and offered them to Cecil, with the prettiest half-shy manner; then, drawing a chair forward, she waved her into it, and seated herself again on the table.

"Are you fond of flowers?" asked Cecil, who had become curious to hear the sound of her cousin's voice.

"Very," she replied, half under her breath, offering another rose.

"My dear Cecil!" exclaimed Mrs Fleming, coming in with outstretched arms, "how glad I am to see you. You must be tired, and I hope you are hungry: but, first, you shall come to your room." As she spoke, she embraced her niece affectionately, and then led Cecil up stairs. Whoever she was, this Mrs Fleming appeared a very elegant woman; very slender, graceful in her bearing, and with a sweet and intelligent countenance; but her worn and suffering aspect showed she was a great invalid.

It was a pretty airy room, looking out on the sea. The windows were open, and the moon was just rising. Cecil was charmed with everything.

"See, you are next to Lena on this side," said Mrs Fleming, opening a door; "my maid, Dixon, sleeps on the other; but if you don't like to sleep alone, we will have her in here."

"I am not at all afraid, aunt," said Cecil, "though I slept with Lou at Thornley."

“Was that your maid, my dear?”

“Oh, no : Miss Morland,” said Cecil, laughing.

“Well, you must tell me which you like,” said Mrs Fleming. “Will you bathe?—shall you enjoy it? We have no lessons here ; hardly any books : can you live without music? Oh ! these things are too fine for the seaside ; you must let me treat you as my own little girl while you are with me, and get you a straw hat and a gingham frock : the spray spoils everything.”

There was a delicacy in this that touched Cecil, always alive to kindness. It made her blush, in after-life, to think of the weight she attached to that unwieldy bonnet ; and when it was taken off, and put into a cupboard with a handkerchief over it, she felt a load lifted off her heart, as well as her head.

And there was a broad-leafed hat, like the one she had been eying down stairs, with its ample white strings hanging over the edge of

the shelf; and Mrs Dixon was stooping over her opened trunk, and measuring the skirt of one of her odious frocks; while a great heap of pink gingham was lying on the table, ready to be cut into dresses for her use.

Cecil was demonstrative: she threw her arms round her aunt, and thanked her with all her heart; and if she had a wish ungratified, it was that her uncle Ned might for once see her properly dressed. She did not know that Mr Morland had written to entreat that Mrs Fleming would refresh Cecil's straitened wardrobe at his expense, and that Mrs Fleming had replied that she would attend to his wishes in part, but being no arithmetician she hoped she might be allowed to order a few articles for her handsome niece without being called to *account*.

They found Lena crouched on a footstool at her father's feet, with a concertina resting on her knee, her fingers drawing forth strange accords, almost unconsciously, from time to

time. She rose and placed a little wicker chair for her cousin, with a simple politeness of manner that never deserted her.

There was an elegant little supper laid out in the next room. Mr Fleming handed Cecil to the table, and helped her first ; he took wine with her, and hoped she was prepared to put up with very rustic hours and habits.

There was nothing very rustic in the galantine he was dispensing, nor in the large pine that stood in a vase of frosted silver in the centre of the little table. Cecil felt herself a great personage on being appealed to ; and she said graciously, "that the school-room hours at Thornley were very early, and she only hoped that rustic habits included their being constantly out of doors."

Mrs Fleming assured her that they almost lived on the beach ; and the conversation went on between the three speakers, Lena remaining silent, but fixing her great eyes on Cecil with an inquiring look.

"I have never seen Lord Morland," said Mr Fleming: "is he like his brother?"

"Oh no! uncle Ned is so much slighter," replied Cecil; "uncle Morland is rather stout, but they are none of them tall. Lou and Hen are so little, you can't think! So is Aunt Morland: uncle Morland says I shall soon be as tall as he is."

"And you wish to be tall, I dare say?" said Mrs Fleming, smiling.

Cecil laughed, and blushed.

"Lord Morland is not much at home, I believe?" said Mr Fleming.

"No—I wish he was. I ride with him and Basil, and he rows me in his wager-boat when he is at home—and he has given me a spaniel—oh! such a beauty!—hardly bigger than your hand."

"And don't your cousins ride and boat with you?" asked Mrs Fleming.

"No—Hen is afraid, and Lou has no time: she is learning so many things."

"And what do you learn?" asked her uncle

“Only music and dancing—I don’t draw—and French, and Italian, and geometry, and English composition, and history, and the rest; but Lou learns to paint in enamel, and she plays three instruments, and learns German, and perspective, and Euclid, besides botany and astronomy.”

“And her sister?” inquired Mrs Fleming.

“Oh! they can’t get her on at all: Hen has no talents. Laura beats her in everything; and yet she hates learning, too.”

“What shall we say to little Lena?” said Mr Fleming, kindly laying his hand on her head, “who does not even know French.”

Lena drew down her father’s hand, and held it between hers.

Mrs Fleming interposed quickly, “There’s plenty of time, my dear Ernest; we will not hurry her.

“No—no, she shall not be hurried,” said Mr Fleming. “And the young ladies—are they pretty?”

“Not at all—at least, if you take what uncle Ned says. Lou thinks herself like uncle Morland; but she’s not, for he is very handsome.”

“He is a very fine rider I have heard,” said Mr Fleming.

“Oh, very!—he has the lightest hand: he can ride a horse that has lamed two grooms—a perfect fury of a barb—he’s like a lamb with uncle Morland.”

“Which do you like the best of your two uncles?” asked Mrs Fleming.

“Oh! uncle Ned!” exclaimed Cecil, eagerly; “but I like uncle Morland *very* much: the house is not the same when he is away.”

“Now, for those young ladies who have travelled a hundred miles since breakfast,” said Mrs Fleming, “I recommend a long night’s rest. Lena, dearest, ring for Dixon.”

Mrs Fleming lit Cecil’s taper. Lena having embraced her father and mother, followed her cousin silently, step by step, her concertina under her arm. Dixon halted at the stair-head,

and pulling Lena from Cecil, who had stooped to kiss her, said, tartly—

“Now, Miss Lena, I shall do Miss Fleming’s hair first; so you mind and adone with your reading by that time, and lay out your combs and brushes.”

“Oh! leave the door open, Lena,” said Cecil; “and read aloud, please: I should so like it.”

Mrs Dixon having unplaited the rich profusion of Cecil’s hair, was now brushing vehemently. Lena came into the doorway, all filled with the moonlight, with a heavy velvet book in her hand, and in a voice, “much above singing,” began to read the Psalms for the evening. Cecil was astonished. It had not been the way at Thornley to read a line of the Bible that could be avoided. But she thought it very beautiful, so read; and by the time it was finished her head was on her pillow, and Lena’s figure had melted from its frame: the subdued murmur of the waves, now at low tide, had replaced her musical tones; and the

slow heaving of the distant boats, as they swayed in the moonlight to and fro before her window, seemed to keep time to a strange soft melody, that filled the air around her, and drew her gently to sleep. Her cousin, Lena, was playing her accordion.

CHAPTER VII.

Gone down the tide ;
And the long moonbeam on the hard wet sand
Lay like a jasper column half uprear'd.

LANDOR.

CEORL.—He 's humble to the poor to spite the rich ;
Give me the man that 's humble to his peers.

TAYLOR.

No girls could look prettier than the two cousins when dressed for the beach the next morning ; with their fresh pink frocks, their broad hats and fluttering ribbons, their fine thread stockings and slender boots of gray contil, their dark kid gloves, made like gauntlets to button over the sleeves—so careful was Mrs Fleming lest their wrists should be touched with the sun

—and their black silk pelerines à l'enfant. Lena always looked like an angel, or like the Virgin Mary; and she spoke so seldom, that you might suppose she was pondering some deep secret in her heart.

Cecil looked like a Hebe, all grace and animation, with the golden light glancing in her rippled hair, and her blue eyes full of laughter and enjoyment as she greeted her uncle and aunt.

“We don't look much the worse for our journey, I think,” said Mr Fleming, in a tone that pretty plainly bespoke his admiration.

“Oh! no uncle—I slept so well,” said Cecil; “and after breakfast we are going to find shells on the sands.”

There were three ranges of rocks below the house. The first was a broad low extent of irregular stones, covered with fine green seaweed like grass. The second stood at low tide some twelve or fifteen feet above the sand, in every strange variety of shape; and beyond these

there came a lower range, some six or eight feet high, still more fantastic in their form, from which the waves never quite receded, but kept bubbling and gurgling among their hollows, with a low regular music of their own.

It was Lena's delight to get to these rocks: perhaps she had a vague hope of seeing a mermaid lurking between their clefts. There grew plenty of that long ribbon-like seaweed which children love to gather; and sometimes in the sand, or in a hollow, might be found those small shells of the *Trochus* kind, sheening with opal tints; or perhaps a rare *Volute*, or those delicate pink *Tellinae*, which nearly matched Lena's transparent colour. She would spend hours hovering about these rocks, her mind filled with indistinct shadows: nothing would have surprised her—no fairies or sea-nymphs would have seemed out of place in those strange abodes. There was a charm in their very gloom, in the dripping seaweed that flapped overhead, in the dark hollows filled with water left by the tide.

There was a sense almost of danger, that was pleasant too; for when the tide began to return, it rushed impetuously over the farthest rocks, and covered them in a few moments, rendering the sands between the ridges soft and impassable. In the language of the country people, a person left on the rocks at such a time was said to be "flown in;" and it was no easy matter to get to the shore.

While Lena searched for shells, Cecil amused herself much more to her taste with the live stock: she touched the radiant arms of the sea anemones, and with eager delight watched them shrink into a glutinous ball; she dislodged the crabs from their holes, tried to make them run, splashed the starfish back into the water, and diverted herself with their odd movements. She could hardly believe the footman when he came down to tell them that dinner was ready.

"This shall be our favourite place; we will come here every day," said Cecil.

Lena gave her usual little nod of acquiescence.

The Flemings' villa stood about the centre of the bay; on the extreme right a small cluster of houses, and a good hotel, gave the spot something the character of a watering-place. The road to this village passed below the villa, and all the visitors were pretty sure to take that way, whether bound to the beach, or upwards across the hills to the market town of D——.

The Flemings speculated on those they knew by sight, with that kind of light curiosity with which one regards one's neighbours at a watering place. If they cared to ask, the doctor could always give them farther information. He was a little ugly man, kind and clever, and a great friend of Lena, whom he admired very much: he used to call her "The White Lady of Avenel."

"I wish, doctor, you could tell me the name of that gentleman; he has been here two or three days," said Mrs Fleming, one morning when they were all assembled in the verandah; Lena, on her knees, spreading her seaweed to

dry, Cecil just within the window writing to her uncle Ned.

“Ah! Sir Tressel Rothmond!” said the doctor, taking up his glass. “Ay, ay, he’s worth inquiring about: a very grand personage—in his own estimation, at any rate.”

“He’s sick, I imagine, from his always leaning on his son,” said Mr Fleming.

“Ay; and I wish he was well with all my heart,” said the doctor, shortly.

“Come and look at the baronet, Cecil,” said Mr Fleming, “and tell me if you don’t think him a very aristocratic-looking person.”

Cecil folded her letter hastily, and came into the verandah.

The baronet and his son were just descending the ledges of rock in front of the house, so that she had every facility for forming her opinion.

Sir Tressel was very handsome, with pride stamped on every feature; his hair was quite gray, and he wore it all round his face like a

beard, only kept short ; but his eyes and brows were black as night, so that he did not appear much older than he really was. He was leaning on the shoulder of his son, a boy about fifteen, who had the regular and Norman features of his father ; but an extreme gentleness of demeanour that contrasted pleasantly with the haughty bearing of Sir Tressel. The youth had a dark complexion, of that peculiar depth and softness that Murillo alone knew how to paint ; eyes like velvet, and teeth that glittered when he spoke.

Sir Tressel stopped a moment on the steps, and, turning to the servant who followed him, said, harshly—

“I don’t want you. Go and see if there are any letters at D——.”

“And, Edmonds,” said the boy, in a voice of remarkable sweetness, “ask if they have heard anything of my rifle. I can’t imagine what has delayed it.”

They passed on. Cecil gave them another

glance through her eyelashes, and then said, indifferently, "Yes, he's a gentlemanly person, but quite the *country* gentleman: not at all the air of uncle Ned!"

"No, certainly," said Mr Fleming, who contemplated with much satisfaction the letter lying on his table directed to "The Honourable Edward Morland, Albany."

The doctor threw himself back, and laughed heartily.

"I dare say he is a great man in his own country, which is Worcestershire," said he. "He is come to recruit here after a malignant fever, which he caught going to see an Irish haymaker on his estate, who had it."

"How very kind!" said Lena, looking up from her seaweed for the first time.

"Yes, these proud men will be civil enough to a haymaker," said the doctor; "and my young gentleman, who was at Eton at the time, happening to see his father's illness mentioned in the paper, set off, walking right away

into Worcestershire ; got on the first stage-coach he met with, and never rested till he found himself by his father's bedside. Look at the White Lady ! she's going to take flight altogether, I think !”

Lena, who had raised herself at every word more and more, knelt with her hands clasped and her lips apart ; she coloured at the doctor's notice, and sank down again among her seaweeds.

“ So the authorities expelled my young friend for his unceremonious exit,” said the doctor ; “ and the proud old devil, instead of explaining matters, took them at their first word, and means to finish his son's education at home.”

“ He is a very handsome boy,” said Mrs Fleming.

“ A civil spoken young gentleman enough,” said the doctor ; “ he follows me every day out of the room to ask me on the stairs what I think of his father. If I were to tell him candidly, he would be rather surprised.”

"I see that Sir Tressel Rothmond married a daughter of the Duke of Axminster," said Mr Fleming, who had taken down the Baronetage.

"Lady Maria Dawbeney: yes, she died at Paris, some seven or eight years ago, in the time of the cholera. They never agreed," said the doctor.

"I was wondering why he had not rather gone to the Duke of Axminster's seat," said Mr Fleming: "it is not above six miles off."

"They don't speak," said the doctor: "the duke has a knack of quarrelling with his relations."

"He is on very good terms with Lord John," said Cecil; "he has just bought him a very fine estate, not far from Thornley."

"Do you know them?" asked Mr Fleming.

"I used to know them, when poor mamma was alive," said Cecil; "and Basil knows the young Dawbeney's:" but I don't think aunt Morland and Lady John see much of each other."

Mr Fleming looked at Lena crouched unconsciously among her shells, and began to turn over the Peerage.

Cecil had until now seen nothing of domestic happiness: of people whose tastes accorded; and, however respectable domestic life may be, it can hardly be happy without sympathy.

She very soon fathomed the extent of Lena's accomplishments: they were limited enough. Miss Penley would have despaired of her. But there grew in her mind daily a respect for her silent little cousin: she felt, as the doctor said, there was a great deal *in* the child.

The total absence of effort and display that marked her bringing up, surprised Cecil, knowing her to be so rich an heiress.

"I don't care at all whether Lena plays or not," she heard her uncle say to the doctor; "but I own I should be sorry if she did not *feel* Mozart and Beethoven."

It was the same with drawing.

"The mere acquirement is an accident," he

would say. "She will never be a Vandyke or a Thorburn; but I should like her to know why Vandykes and Thorburns are historical treasures."

It was this that gave such a charm to Lena's intellect. Her acquirements were nothing remarkable; but she stood almost alone, for her age, in her perceptions.

One evening the doctor stepped in, and found Mr Fleming reading out the translation of the "First Alcibiades" to his daughter. He could not help watching Lena's eagerness in following that exquisite chain of reasoning,—the perfect acquiescence with which she hailed, by a little nod of the head, what he called "a clencher:" as when Socrates posed Alcibiades by means of his own admissions.

"On my word, we are gone back to the days of Roger Ascham and Jane Grey," he said. "Plato's Divine Dialogues! The child is not unlike the Lady Jane, with her fair hair."

"I don't want her to read Plato," said Mr

Fleming; "but when anything beautiful comes in her way, I like to see it interest her."

"I think Socrates was the earliest martyr on record," said the doctor.

"Oh! my dear doctor,—why, he was not a Christian," said Mrs Fleming.

"Well, but what is a martyr?" asked Mr Fleming.

"A person who dies in a good cause," said the doctor.

"I think," said Lena's little musical subdued voice, "it is a person who has a choice about dying."

"Let us hear what the White Lady has to say about it," said the doctor.

"If a person dies in a good cause, who can't help it, I think we pity him very much," said Lena; "but I think a person is a martyr who has the offer to live in a wrong belief, but who *chooses* to die rather than give up his faith."

"I believe the child is right," said the doc-

tor: "the death must be voluntary; which Socrates' was not."

"Nor that of King Charles; though the Prayer Book has so registered him," said Mr Fleming.

"The White Lady may not know French," said the doctor, rising to take his leave; "but I congratulate her on knowing what is much more rare—her own language."

It was somewhat late that evening; they had all been standing in the verandah, looking at the moon, and as they were returning to the drawing-room, Cecil missed Lena. She stepped back after her, and found her leaning against the little wall that bordered their grass plot, signing with her hand towards the sea, as if she was saluting some one very earnestly.

"Oh! here you are, dear," said Cecil, joining her: "we are just going in to supper."

Lena made a little gesture of assent.

"To whom did you beckon just now?" asked Cecil, glancing her eye over the bright sands

and the shallow waves rippling back towards the rocks.

"My brothers," she whispered.

"Who are your brothers?" asked Cecil.

"All men," replied Lena, absently.

"Not the fishermen?" said Cecil.

"Yes,—all," said Lena.

"You should not kiss your hand to the fishermen," said Cecil.

"I didn't," replied Lena.

Cecil was puzzled.

"You have no brothers?" she resumed.

"They are dead," murmured Lena.

Cecil felt her heart stand still.

"Did you think you saw them?" she asked, shivering as she spoke.

"No," said Lena, "but when I am thinking of them, and the moon shines so brightly, I fancy that—I—the light seems to—" she could not explain her meaning, and she stopped.

"Is it long since?" asked Cecil.

“Two years ago : they died together, in Cyprus,” said Lena.

“Both at one time ?” exclaimed Cecil.

“Yes, of the Syrian fever. And since then my head has been weak : I learn no lessons.”

Cecil’s arm stole round her cousin.

“Poor little Lena !” she exclaimed.

“It will be a long time before I see them,” said Lena :—“a few years seem long.”

She drew a deep breath, but she did not cry ; Cecil’s tears were falling fast.

“Now mamma is coming, and we must say nothing,” said Lena, pressing her cousin’s hand ; “because, as papa says, it is worse for her than for me.”

Mrs Fleming came to call them in to supper. No wonder her eyes rested so wistfully on the fragile little creature who remained to her ; no wonder she guarded her so carefully from every exertion.

“We won’t read any more to-night, papa,” she said, as Mr Fleming took up his book

after supper. "I think my Lena looks a little weary."

"My Lena shall go to bed then," said Mr Fleming, starting up with his joyous laugh, and lighting a taper; "and when she gets a colour like her cousin Cecil, then we'll read as if we were going to take our degree,—won't we, Lena?"

CHAPTER VIII.

While yet she saw the land and sunlit sky,
And teeming sea, that sparkled with his ray,
She still, perchance, her mother might descry.

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The mountain tops, and the deep ocean bed,
Echoed her cries: her mother heard: dismay—
Keen anguish struck her heart.

HOMER'S HYMNS.

“AFTER all, I’m growing a little tired of these rocks,” said Cecil, pausing, with her basket full of seaweed, and pushing back her hat. “Suppose we walk to the point yonder?”

“Shall we ask leave?” said Lena.

“Oh, no; aunt Fleming knows you are safe with me,” replied Cecil.

They had often talked of going beyond the projecting rock that formed the boundary of their little world. It ran out far into the sea,

and it was only in summer that the tide receded far enough to leave a sure pathway round the base, composed of rough fragments that had fallen from the cliff.

The children slipped and scrambled from rock to rock, in high glee, until they turned the promontory, as they ambitiously called it. The scene was rough and grand beyond description. The coast receded until nothing but sea stretched before the eye on that side, and instead of the verdure that marked the downs behind the village, rugged cliffs of many tints were hurled upon each other. Deep ravines between these rocks extended farther inland, and in some places a silver thread, trickling from rock to rock, marked the course of a mountain stream towards the sea.

In one of those ravines, raised a good way above the level of the beach, they observed a cottage, built something in the fashion of a Swiss chalet, with a verandah running round the upper story, sheltered by the projecting

roof, and accessible by steps from without. Down below on the beach, just under the cottage, was one of those black sheds used by fishermen to keep their nets and rigging; and close by, a pretty craft, something larger than a fishing-boat, apparently not quite finished.

This cottage was surrounded with a garden of tolerable size, fenced with a low paling, and filled with a profusion of flowers of the gayest colours. An old woman, in a singular costume, wearing a black silk hood, from beneath which gleamed a pair of brilliant eyes, and large circular gold ear-rings, was gathering some vegetables into a basket. Lena, who loved flowers, drew her cousin nearer and nearer to the rustic enclosure.

"There's a white fuschia, Cecil," said Lena; "I wish you would ask the old woman if it belongs to her."

"She's a foreigner," said Cecil. "I wonder whether French would do."

"Stay, here is a man coming; he looks like a pirate," said Lena, shrinking close to Cecil.

"I never saw a pirate," returned Cecil, laughing: "where is he?"

"Coming down the rocks," said Lena. "I once saw a whole crew, who had been taken prisoners, brought to Cyprus."

"Oh! this is amusing," said Cecil, pulling Lena down beside her on a fragment of rock. "Let us see what he will have to say to the old woman."

"He might carry us away, you know," said Lena.

"What for?" asked Cecil.

"For ransom," replied Lena.

"Why, there are two of us," said Cecil.

Lena looked uncertain as to their power of making battle against the pirate; who was a tall, resolute-looking man, with a good deal of dark hair about his face, and an eye that took in sea and sky with that rapid glance peculiar to seafaring people.

He came into the garden by a side-gate, and touched the old woman on the shoulder; she started, made the sign of the cross, and then embraced him.

"She's a Corsican," said Lena.

"How do you know?" asked Cecil.

"Because she made the cross with her thumb—so," replied Lena, imitating the action.

The man, who was dressed like a foreign sailor, in a coarse blue dress—except that he wore a broad felt hat and dark gauntlets, such as some gentlemen wear when they prune trees—took a large knife from a sheath in his belt, and began to cut some of the shrubs, talking and laughing to the old woman meantime.

"He speaks pure Italian," said Lena. "Who can they be?"

"Do you know Italian?" asked Cecil.

"I picked up a little Venetian at Cyprus, because we had a Venetian servant," said Lena; "but I have never learned any."

"What are they saying?" asked Cecil.

"He asks how she got on while he was away, and whether she was disturbed by any of the English heretics."

"She says to him—'My son'—oh! you see,

the sailor is the old woman's son—"I have remained tranquil, except that the heretic baker did not bring my loaves yesterday." And, see how the sailor is laughing. Now he is looking at us."

The sailor had come to the gate, and was leaning upon it, looking hard at the children seated together on the rock.

"Giovanna!" he said, "come and look at these beautiful children."

"Holy Virgin!" replied the old woman, coming beside him, "they are two real angels of God."

"Which do you like the best?" asked the sailor.

"The little one, with her serious eyes," said the old woman: "she is a true copy of the Holy Virgin."

"Well, the other one is good enough for a sinner like me; but they are both beautiful," said the sailor.

Lena then got up quietly, and, advancing to

the gate, said, in all simplicity, to the man, in Italian, "Is that your house, sailor?"

"It is, little lady," he replied.

"Did you make it?" she asked.

"I mended it, little lady," he said: "it was a worse hut than this when I came to it."

"And these flowers are yours?"

"They are yours, if you fancy them," said the sailor, throwing open the gate courteously.

"And you are not a pirate?" she continued.

"Not the least in the world, little lady," he said, with a joyous burst of laughter.

"A pirate! Holy Mother!" exclaimed the old woman, clasping her hands.

"I dare say I look very rough," he said, speaking in English; "but I am English: and so are you, I suppose, in spite of your pretty little Venetian lisp. If I don't frighten you, come in, and gather what you like."

"I thank you, sailor, I may not come in," said Lena; "but will you be so kind as to tell me where you got that white fuschia?"

"This?"—he asked, gathering it, and giving it to her—"this came from Falmouth, where I landed."

"And that orange briar?" said Lena.

"I brought that from Genoa," said the sailor, looking steadily at the tree: "strange it should have lived."

"The City of the Plague," murmured the old woman, who had caught the name.

"To us, Giovanna," said the man, breaking off two or three of the flowers, which he handed to Lena over the paling.

"Come, Lena," whispered Cecil, drawing her back.

"Thank you very much. Good bye, sailor," said Lena with her pretty little, simple manner.

"Good bye, little lady," he returned; then, just as they were moving away, he happened to catch Cecil's eye; and, as if thinking her older than Lena, he suddenly took off his hat to her, uncovering a broad forehead, fringed with short, dark hair, like the heads of Elizabeth's time.

Cecil's blushes were as ready as her smiles or tears; her face was suffused directly, as she bowed, and hastened with Lena down the bank.

"I think, Lena, we should not stop and talk to strangers," said Cecil, when they had turned the point and were out of sight of the chalet.

Lena, who was stumbling along, all her thoughts absorbed by her flowers, looked up surprised, and exclaimed—"Dear me, Cecil, he is only a sailor, you know."

"He may be a sailor, but he is a gentleman," replied Cecil.

"Dear me!" said Lena; and she looked quite incredulously into her cousin's face: "not what one calls a gentleman—not a rich man?"

"He's much more a gentleman than your fine baronet yonder," said Cecil warmly.

"Oh!" said Lena, contentedly, "then I need not mind taking his flowers, you know."

When they came in, they found Mr and Mrs Fleming examining the contents of a box of books just arrived from London.

Mrs Fleming had just that love of literature which made her enter into whatever was going forward; she said she never read, but she was always dipping into books. Mr Fleming trusted her taste implicitly; and whenever she said, "I think, Ernest, you would like such a work," he never failed to read it, and like it too.

Lena was soon seated at her father's feet, cutting the leaves of a review—a task that always fell to her share—her blond head stooped, and her little fingers rustling among the pages, as silent as ever. Mrs Fleming, lying on the sofa, was glancing through a volume of travels. Cecil picked up the flowers which Lena had let fall, and put them in a vase.

"What fine briar roses!" said Mrs Fleming.

"Oh, we had an adventure! Tell papa, please," said Lena, looking up to Cecil.

"No, let my little Lena speak, for once," interposed Mr Fleming, stroking her hair.

Lena gave a preparatory sigh, and then related their discovery of the chalet, and their interview with the sailor.

“And Cecil says he is a gentleman,” said Mr Fleming. “Very curious : I’ll ask the doctor who he can be.”

But the doctor did not know : he merely supposed the fellow had never been sick, as he had heard nothing of him.

Every now and then Mr Fleming was obliged to go to London for a few days ; and his absence was very much felt by the whole party, though it in no way altered their habits. Every afternoon the carriage came from the hotel, and took them a drive into the country ; sometimes, but seldom in Mr Fleming’s absence, the ladies went out on donkeys to explore the rocks, and took their dinner to the bank of some mountain-stream. Then it was uncertain at what hour they would return ; and perhaps they might stop on their way at some farmhouse and make a homely meal on eggs and cream cheese and brown bread.

Nothing charmed Cecil more than these irregular hours, so great a contrast to the monotony of

Thornley. Every little incident delighted her : if her donkey ran away with her, or she slipped into a brook, or if she got half-way up a rock and could not get down, her spirits never failed her : she drew enjoyment from everything. Lena enjoyed herself in a quieter manner, with her large religious eyes drinking in every beautiful point of scenery, and her voice always subdued to a whisper, as if her admiration became almost an act of devotion.

Cecil used sometimes to watch her kneeling at her window-sill at night, reading the Bible by the light of the moon ; she had never seen any one before whose feelings were religious. Her aunt Morland went to church twice a-day, and would gladly have gone four times if the clergyman would have performed as often ; Catechisms and Collects were in request every Sunday ; and she had a set of devout phrases that Cecil knew as well as she knew the French grammar : but it gave her a new sense when she saw Lena sink slowly on her knees, the first

Sunday she went to church with the Flemings, her whole being absorbed by the devotion of the hour.

One very hot day that Mr Fleming was in town, Mrs Fleming ordered the carriage to come after their early tea to take them a long drive into the country, that they might see a ruined chapel by moonlight, which stood in a part of the Duke of Axminster's domain. Lena happened to want some pink seaweed, and proposed going down to the rocks in search of it; but Cecil had tired herself in the morning, and her aunt advised her to remain in the verandah and keep herself cool for her drive.

Cecil, who was never obstinate about trifles, complied directly, and took up a book to read to her aunt, while Lena tripped down to the rocks by herself.

It was an interesting work, and they were quite absorbed by it, when Cecil heard the familiar sound of the tide turning—the first rush among the rocks.

"I think, aunt, the tide is coming in—I will go and look for Lena," she said.

"Do, my love," said Mrs Fleming; and she took the book and went on reading.

Cecil ran down the grassy slope, and when she reached the steps leading to the shingles, she saw Lena standing on the second ridge of rocks, her hands uplifted, and gazing down with a look of terror at the waves, which had surrounded the shelf on which she stood; and, although not half a yard deep, rendered the sand (as they had often been warned) unsafe for the foot.

Cecil rushed towards her, ploughing her way across the shingles, with the effort of one who runs in a dream.

"Lena! Lena! I'm coming! don't be frightened!" cried Cecil, struggling on over the heavy beach.

All at once something bounded past her—a large Newfoundland dog—followed by a boy with a rifle under his arm.

He soon outstripped Cecil, and sprang from one rock to another, until he reached, knee-deep in water, a flat stone that stood midway between the two ridges. Lena was on a rock just above him, her hands clasped together; she never screamed, and she uttered no sound, but her terror was extreme; at her feet floated the little straw basket that she had been filling so intently as not to mark the turn of the tide.

The boy stretched out his hand to her. "Don't be afraid," he cried. "Spring across boldly; I'll take care of you: the sea is coming in so fast that you have no time to lose."

Lena threw herself from the rock in such mortal terror, that she fell down at the base, quite into the water.

Cecil thought Lena was sinking out of sight, and, careless of waves or quicksands, she dashed on to help her cousin, when she was held back by a powerful arm; and, turning round, she saw the sailor of the *châlet*.

"No need for both of you to drown, Signorina," he said: "but it's all right with the child. Stay where you are, and I'll lend them a hand."

He strode forward into the water, picked up the little basket and handed it to Cecil; and seeing that the boy who had lifted Lena from the water had much ado to support her, he took her up in his arms, asked where she lived, told the young gentleman to look to Cecil, and walked quickly up the beach, followed by Cecil; to whom the young Rothmond had politely offered his arm.

But, when they entered the enclosure, a new scene awaited them: poor Mrs Fleming lying senseless in the arms of Dixon, just where she had fallen while trying to run to the assistance of her child. And there was Lena with the water dropping from her clothes, the sailor wet to the knees, the boy still more drenched, the great dog sprinkling the whole party every time he shook his rough coat, and Cecil trembling so that she could hardly support herself.

“Oh! Miss Lena!” cried Dixon, who was kneeling on the grass supporting Mrs Fleming’s head on her arm; “look here, and see what you’ve been and done!”

“Done! Corpo di Bacco!” exclaimed the sailor, in a tone that made Cecil start, setting down Lena just in front of Dixon as he spoke. “The child is half-drowned! Get her something hot, and give her dry clothes.”

Lena turned her piteous eyes on her mother, and began to cry bitterly.

“Oh! sailor, what shall I do with mamma!” she said.

The sailor lifted Mrs Fleming on a sofa, and looked about, as if not knowing what to do.

“You come with me this moment, Miss Lena,” said Dixon, plucking her from her mother’s pillow—“only to see the mess you’re in! Good gracious!”

“Let her stay, Dixon,” said Cecil, bursting into tears; for the sight recalled her own mother’s deathbed. “Oh! I wish the doctor was here!”

"Shall I run for him?" asked the boy, looking very wretched, as some men do when women cry: for Dixon, catching the infection, was beginning to sniff.

"Oh! bless you, Miss Fleming, I sent for the doctor the first thing," said Dixon.

"And here he comes, I do believe," said the boy.

"Then we may as well be off," said the sailor. "Keep up your heart, little lady; your mother is coming round: and here is the doctor."

And bowing to the girls, with a sort of careless dignity, he walked to the door.

"I thank you very much," said Cecil; "and so would Lena if she could speak."

Mrs Fleming was recovering; and finding Lena's eager face bent over her, she recovered all the faster. There were nothing but kisses and tears for some time; of which Cecil came in for her share. Meantime the doctor, who had entered without saying anything, had been giving his directions; he rather reminded Cecil of her uncle Ned, by his dry manner of

placing a glass of hot wine and water in the hand of each, during a pause in the embracing. Then Lena was swept off to bed in the arms of Mrs Dixon, and Cecil and her aunt sat talking over the perils of the day till the doctor ordered them away in their turn.

When Cecil went into her cousin's room to wish her good night, she saw her velvet prayer-book lying on the table, with the fly-leaf open.

There was a list of names written in it, of those persons whom she wished to mention in her evening prayer—a little fancy of hers, for she was not likely to forget any of them.

The last name, in Lena's irregular hand, was not yet dry.

They stood thus:—

Papa.

Mamma.

Dixon.

Cecil.

Boy.

For Lena took everything seriously ; and she

firmly believed it her duty to pray for the person who had rescued her from a watery grave.

CHAPTER IX.

While in shepherd hamlet dark,
Thou livest, with want within, and raiment coarse without,
And none upon thy state hath thrown
Gentle regard ; I—I alone
To new and lofty venture call thee out.
Then, follow, thus besought,
Waste not thy soul in thought,
Brooks nor sloth nor lingering,
The great moment on the wing.

FROM GUIDI.

“I MUST manage to thank these gentlemen,” said Mr Fleming. “Upon my word, I am very grateful to them. But I must run the chance of meeting Mr Rothmond ; for I don’t think Sir Tressel would much relish my calling at his house : he would think I was trying to make his acquaintance.”

"But we can go to the sailor, papa," said Lena: "we know where to find him."

"So we will," said Mr Fleming. "Come, Cecil."

"Me!" exclaimed Cecil, drawing a little back.

"To be sure," replied Lena, clinging to her cousin: "the idea of going without Cecil!"

As they turned the point, they perceived the sailor leaning against his boat, smoking a long Turkish pipe; the old woman standing beside him knitting; a little roguish-looking boy, also in a sailor's dress, was working at the rigging of the vessel.

The sailor raised his hat, with a smile, when he saw Lena, and handed his pipe to the old Corsican woman.

Mr Fleming expressed his thanks very courteously for the welcome assistance he had rendered to his little girl.

"And I thank you very much, too, sailor," said Lena; "and I wish I could have come before, but, until papa returned, I was not trusted to go on the beach."

The sailor took her little hand which she held out, frankly, and looked at her kindly.

“Why, little lady, I ’m puzzled to know what I did,” he said, “the young gentleman is the hero. However, I was very glad to lend a hand. I think I saved the signorina there from going in after you.”

Mr Fleming looked delighted at Cecil, who coloured, and said nothing.

“You are from the Levant, I think, sir?” said Mr Fleming. “I recognise the form of your pipe. I used to smoke such a one at Cyprus.”

“A better one than this, I dare say,” replied the sailor, with a careless laugh, taking it from the old woman as he spoke. “This is not worth sixpence; your professed smokers buy them by the gross.”

“Have you been a great traveller?” asked Mr Fleming.

“No—principally the shores of the Mediterranean. I have always had a leaning to the sea.”

“And are you building this pretty ship yourself, sailor?” asked Lena.

“Yes—I am helping, little lady: don’t you think it does me credit?” he asked.

There was a careless dignity in the sailor’s bearing, totally different from the polish gained in society, which yet impressed Mr Fleming with his being *somebody*, as Cecil had said. He wished to ask his name, but had no excuse for doing so. Lena, in her simple way, settled the matter.

“Yes, sailor,” she replied. “I call you sailor, because I do not know your name.”

“My name is Hurst,” he said, “John Hurst, at your service. Will you like to look at the craft?”

He lifted her into the boat, and showed her the small cabins, and the different conveniences of the vessel.

“Hurst! there’s nothing very aristocratic in that name,” said Mr Fleming, aside to Cecil.

“He’s a person of condition for all that,” re-

plied Cecil, "with that sort of decision she had acquired from her uncle Morland: look at his hand. Uncle Ned says that the Greek hand, though beautiful, is no sign of race; but the Norman hand, with the oval nails, proves birth on one side or other."

"Ah! I see," replied Mr Fleming, glancing at the sailor, who stood fingering the stalk of his pipe, as he talked to Lena: "you are quite right, my dear."

"And what shall you do with this boat, sailor?" asked Lena, as he handed her out of it.

"Sail in it, little lady," he answered, laughing.

"Yes, but where?"

"I have a fancy to visit the Hebrides," he replied.

"And who will go with you?" she asked.

"That young scamp," he said, pointing with his pipe to the cabin-boy, "and my old Corsican."

"Will she like it?" asked Lena.

"She can't help herself," he replied: "she could not make it out alone here, for she does not know a word of the language; and she's used to the sea; for though *I* have never sailed under the black flag, she is the widow of a man who was little better than a buccaneer."

"And is she any relation to you?" asked Lena, looking anxiously at the sailor.

"She was my nurse; and she received the last breath of my father and mother, dead of the fever at Genoa," said the sailor, in a short hard tone, as one determined not to show any emotion. "Besides, the woman has good sense: she is to me what the nurse of Charles IX. was to him, if you remember such a person."

"I don't, sailor; but I dare say Cecil does: she knows so much," returned Lena.

Cecil did not seem anxious to establish her reputation, and Lena went on.

"Then she will always live with you, I suppose?"

“Always,” he replied, in the same hard tone; “though not always in that hut.”

“Then you will be better off, one day, sailor?” said Lena.

“I shall,” he replied, smiling at her simple questioning: “what some people call better off; but I’m something of a philosopher, and doubt it.”

“Lena, my dear,” said her father, “you came to thank this gentleman for his kindness, and you must not take up his time with your questions; which have nothing to do with yourself.”

“I like it,” said the sailor decidedly.

“And I like to talk to you, sailor,” said Lena: “may I come again and see your ship?”

“Come and see *me*, little lady,” said the sailor, laughing.

Mr Fleming laughed too; so did Lena, though she coloured a little. Cecil took her uncle’s arm, and turned away.

“There’s nothing very amusing, I think, in his ship,” she said, as they were walking home.

“Oh ! I think so,” said Lena ; “there are two cabins, and a little fireplace ; and the old woman cooks for him : it must be so pleasant.”

“How wonderfully Lena got on with him,” said Mr Fleming to Cecil : “I don’t know that I ever heard her talk so much.”

Cecil drily assented. It must be confessed that she felt a little piqued that Lena took the lead in this affair—she who was always first at Thornley. The sailor did not appear to know she was present ; for she was just at that age when girls are least noticed by strangers,—too old to be played with, not old enough to be supposed capable of conversation.

Mrs Dixon was in waiting for Lena at the foot of the stairs. “You are wanted, Miss Lena,” she said, twitching off her hat, and inflicting a sharp brush on her silken hair, “there’s the young gentleman come as picked you up out of the water.”

Lena slid out of her hands, and ran straight

to the drawing room, exclaiming, as she came in all breathless and dyed with blushes,—

“Oh! boy, I am so glad to see you, and thank you.”

“Mr Rothmond, my love,” said Mrs Fleming, in a gentle under-tone.

Lena bent her head in perfect accordance that he should be called by that name, and sat down by her mother.

“I’m quite ashamed,” said Mr Rothmond: “Mrs Fleming has been so kind as to thank me, really for nothing,—I ran no risk, you know: I wish I had, with all my heart.”

Lena looked at him, and then round upon the company, as if to say, “Did you ever hear the like of that?”

“I called to see you,” continued Mr Rothmond: “we are going on to Wrexworth, to see my grandfather to-morrow; and I am so glad I did not miss you.”

“The Duke of Axminster?” asked Mr Fleming.

“Yes. Have you seen Wrexworth? It is a

very good specimen of Gothic architecture ; but I prefer the early English," said Mr Rothmond.

"No : you don't see the house from the road : and that reminds me, Selina, when you are able we must really go to the chapel at Holyfield."

"That is a gem," observed Mr Rothmond to Lena : do you like ruins ? "

" I think she likes rocks better," remarked Mr Fleming, smiling.

" Ah !" said Mr Rothmond, " have you been on those rocks again ?"

" Oh, no !" she replied in her half-whispered tone ; " never again !"

" Why, you are not afraid, are you ?" he asked.

" Yes—very !" she replied.

" If you will go with me I'll take care of you," said the boy ; " we will find shells together."

Lena looked up wistfully in her mamma's face.

" Oh ! if Mr Rothmond is willing to take so much trouble," said Mrs Fleming.

Lena's face lit up.

"Shall we say to-morrow morning?" asked Mr Rothmond.

"We are just going to dinner," said Mrs Fleming; "if you will make it your luncheon we shall be very happy."

"Thank you very much. I'm sorry I can't stay," said Mr Rothmond, taking out his watch; "for I promised my father to drive with him at two: but I shall see you to-morrow."

"The tide is down at eleven," said Lena.

"That will do perfectly: we don't go to Wrexworth till the afternoon," said Mr Rothmond; and he took his leave.

"It is singular," Cecil overheard her uncle say to Mrs Fleming, when Lena was out of the room; "but their ages are so very suitable—fifteen and twelve—eh?"

"My dear Ernest! speculating already?" said Mrs Fleming, smiling.

"And, you see, an old baronet—connected with a ducal house—and so very pleasing a boy!

Although I should prefer a higher rank, I think I could hardly do better on the whole!" added Mr Fleming.

"Seven years hence," my dear Ernest, "will be time enough," answered his wife.

"I am surprised to hear of the Rothmonds going to Wrexworth, after what the doctor told us," observed Mr Fleming.

"At his age, it is a pleasant thing to find that the duke does not keep up his resentments," was Mrs Fleming's reply.

"I saw his Grace's carriage this morning in the village," said Mr Fleming; "but there were only two young ladies in it, about Cecil's age, with their maid."

Cecil looked up.

"Oh! I daresay they were his granddaughters, the Dawbeney girls," she said. "Emily's teeth stick out very much, and Adela is a sickly, sandy-haired girl."

"Your portrait is correct, my dear; though not very complimentary," said Mr Fleming, laughing.

“ I do so dislike them,” said Cecil : “ you have no idea the airs they give themselves. Aunt Morland asked them to a Christmas party last year, and they came ; but not Lady John. You see, the fact is, that Lady John belongs to quite a different set from my aunt ; the girls have found that out, and, I assure you, they would hardly speak to Lou and Hen ; and though, as children, we lived next door to them, and met almost every day, they pretended to have forgotten Laura and me, and had to be introduced to us over again. I told uncle Ned that I would always cut them henceforth, wherever I might meet them.

Mr Fleming laughed : but these sketches of a society above his own were very much to his taste. Mrs Fleming was perfectly devoid of this fondness for great people ; and the idea of Lena carrying her fortune to repair the extravagance of some man of rank, would have filled her with horror, if she could have believed Mr Fleming really entertained such a thought.

“I happened to be in the circulating library the other day,” observed Mr Fleming, “when the duke’s gentleman came in for some French novels for his own reading.”

“A very bad thing,” said Mrs Fleming, simply; “for people so rarely select those which are quite harmless.”

“Yes; only it shows the sort of establishment the duke keeps, when his valet can read French,” rejoined Mr Fleming.

Cecil was rather amused to hear all this talk about the duke. The only member of his family whom she knew at all was Lord John Dawbeney; and she was so accustomed to hear Lord Morland speak of him with contempt, as regarded horses, that she looked down upon him excessively. She knew that he sat a horse badly, and that he would go any distance rather than leap a fence, and there was an end of him; as she said, with a wave of her hand, when her uncle questioned her about him.

Young Rothmond kept his appointment, and

Lena spent a happy hour collecting shells with him on the rocks ; Cecil and Mr Fleming loitering near.

The next day he rode over from Wrexworth to help her to arrange the shells ; and the next, to show her how to preserve her sea-weeds. On these occasions he took luncheon with the Flemings, and at length it became an understood thing that they should see him sometime during the day.

Two things were constantly on Mr Fleming's mind respecting him : one, that by some strange accident he might be the means of bringing them acquainted with the Duke of Axminster ; the other, that he might form an early attachment to Lena.

It is speaking within bounds to say, that if Sir Tressel had guessed at either of these plans, he would have gladly consigned Mr Fleming to the gallows ; but he thought that, at his son's age, it little mattered with whom he associated, and that he might as well amuse himself with

Mr Fleming's little girl, as with any of the fishermen's children on the coast; and the boy shunned his Dawbeney cousins as if they had the plague: much to Lady John's annoyance, who wished to interest him in Adela.

But a greater delight to Lena even than Mr Rothmond's visits, was to go and watch the progress of the fairy ship, and talk to the sailor and the old Corsican. Whenever she could persuade her papa to walk that way she was happy. If he urged that she interrupted Mr Hurst in his work, she would say, "No—he is always glad to see me." And so he was: he would throw down his hammer, or his spade, when she came near, and gather her flowers or raspberries, or take her into the ship and teach her to furl a sail; or, greatest treat of all, summon the old woman to light a fire in the cabin, and to make her some coffee, or let her play at cooking.

While Lena was thus engaged, lisping Venetian to the old Corsican, who barely understood

her, Hurst would sit on the beach with Mr Fleming, smoking and talking, chiefly of books ; for there is a free-masonry in literature which those who love reading intuitively discover. Often, while they were discussing Montesquieu, or Davila, Lena's fair head would be popped over the side of the vessel with some exclamation of quiet delight, such as "Papa, the fire quite burns up now ;" or, "Papa, we are making some famous maccaroni." Sometimes she would prefer sitting beside them on the beach, and listening to their conversation.

"I should think, sailor," she said one day, with a pretty little air of wisdom, "that you must have read a great deal."

"I! no, little lady," he said, "I have read a very little, and that's why I enjoy it. Reading a great deal is something like eating a great deal ; you lose your relish for it, though at the same time you can't do without it."

"It's a great deal to me, sailor, who read nothing," said Lena.

"You don't want to read, little lady: you have ideas of your own," he said.

Cecil was rarely of the party: she preferred staying with her aunt; for the sailor seemed to overlook her, and she did not notice how often his dark deep-set blue eyes were directed towards her with a keen glance of admiration.

One day Lena was more silent than usual—for, as her papa remarked, she always talked to Mr Hurst—till all at once she said, "Sailor, where do you go to church?"

"Nowhere, little lady," he replied.

"Oh, sailor!" cried Lena, holding up her hands.

"This is my church!" he exclaimed, waving his hand towards the rocks that were frowning above their heads.

"That is no church at all," said Lena.

"Well, and what do you go to church for," he asked, with a laugh.

"To do me good," she answered.

"And if I went, it would be just to see you," he returned.

"That is not right," rejoined Lena, gravely.

"Suppose I don't want to be seen," said Hurst.

"That cannot be, for you are not a thief," she answered.

"How do you know that? — you took me for a pirate at first.

"And you told me you were not one," replied Lena.

"You can't put her from her text," said Mr Fleming.

"Suppose I did not tell you true," the sailor suggested.

"Giovanna says you are not a pirate: she says you are a great lord," persisted Lena.

"All the English are great lords in Italy," returned Hurst; who seemed, however, more embarrassed than the occasion required. "What next, little lady?"

"The next thing is to come to church," replied Lena; "there is room in our pew."

"Suppose I have no prayer-book."

"You shall have half mine, and it is a very large one," said Lena, earnestly.

"I shall take the lion's share of it."

"So you shall, sailor."

"Well—I 'll come : the child turns one round her finger. Shake hands upon it, little lady," said the sailor, as Mr Fleming rose to go.

"An extraordinary person ! I should like to know his history. What did Giovanna tell you ?" asked Mr Fleming, as he walked home hand in hand with his daughter.

But Lena had nothing farther to tell : Giovanna had simply said the very words she had quoted.

It happened the next morning, while Cecil and Lena were playing on the beach, that the Duke of Axminster's carriage drove up to the steps just below Mr Fleming's villa. The duke and his two granddaughters got out, and came down the steps close to the cousins. The duke was a very tall, thin old man, with hair as white as silver, and piercing light blue eyes ; the

Dawbeney girls pretty much as Cecil had described them. They were tall and well made, but not pretty; and still less attractive in manner. The duke leaned on the arm of a servant, who carried a folding chair.

"Here, grandpapa, don't go any farther," exclaimed the eldest: "we wish to sit down on the beach."

"Is there no shade anywhere?" asked the duke, putting up his double eye-glass.

"Your grace will find no shade nearer than that rock," said the servant, pointing to the cliff that stretched into the sea on the other side of the bay.

"Of course not," said the eldest girl: "who ever expects shade by the sea?"

"And that's too far: well—give me the paper," said the duke, taking the seat which the servant placed for him, and opening the *Times*.

"I thought you liked the sun, grandpapa," observed the youngest girl.

"Not by the sea," my dear: there's such a

glare, I can hardly read," replied the duke, in an irritable tone.

"Come away, or he'll ask us to read to him," muttered the eldest girl, pulling her sister by the arm.

"Oh, wicked girl!" exclaimed Lena, in an earnest whisper to her cousin.

"Just like her! that's Emily," exclaimed Cecil.

"Where are you going, my dears?" asked the duke, looking up from his paper.

"To that cliff, grandpapa, out of the heat," replied the eldest, readily.

"No—don't do that: you will be out of sight," he urged, looking uneasily round.

"Isn't he just like an old hen with one chick?" said the eldest, laughing, to her sister.

"Two chicks, you mean," returned the youngest, improving the witticism.

"Emily, I won't have it. Come back," exclaimed the duke.

"We shall not be out of sight of your spyglass, grandpapa," persisted the youngest.

“Take Evans with you, at any rate,” said the duke, looking round for the servant.

“He’s gone to the village to speak about some biscuits,” objected the eldest girl. “No one will run away with us, grandpapa. I wish they would,” she added, to her sister : “it would make a little change. Come, Adela : he takes us still for children—stupid old man !”

Lena gazed at Cecil with unbounded astonishment.

“Yes—that’s their way,” said Cecil, with all her uncle Ned’s indifference. “When you are as old as I am, you will be surprised at nothing. I’m thankful they did not recognise me; for, though it is very fine and grand to be a Dawbeney, of course, I don’t like the set. Let’s go and tell uncle Fleming we have seen the duke.

CHAPTER X.

When those soft eyes of scarcely conscious thought,
Some tale or thine own fancies would engage
To overflow with tears ; or converse fraught
With passion o'er their depths its fleeting light had wrought.

SHELLEY.

It was a happy day for Lena when Mrs Fleming declared herself well enough to go to the ruined chapel. She was never demonstrative in her joy, but crept about the house more softly than usual, and was found nestled in odd corners playing her concertina ; on which she repeated all the wild airs she had picked up in the Levant during her childhood. Some of these she rendered with a fervent passion, that

made Mrs Fleming more decided than ever not to let her learn music at present: her one aim was not to fatigue or stimulate the child's delicate organization.

It was evening, and the sun was just setting behind the rocks on the other side of the bay. The carriage was waiting at the garden gate, and they were drinking coffee in the verandah before they started.

Lena, who was hovering restlessly about from the wall to the verandah and back again, suddenly spied the picturesque figure of the sailor, with his gray hat on one side, and a dark cloak swinging from one shoulder, coming up from the village.

"Oh, papa! if the sailor were to come with us!" she exclaimed.

"Run out and ask him," said Mr Fleming, laughing.

"Sailor!" cried Lena, as he came under the garden wall.

"Ah! little lady," he answered, stopping short; "how are you?"

"We want you very much to go with us," said Lena.

"To go where?" asked the sailor.

"To Holyfield," replied Lena, earnestly.

"Holyfield?" he repeated, knitting his brows.

"By moonlight!" added Lena.

"Ah, little lady, I have seen the Temple of the Giants by moonlight; which on the whole is a better thing."

Lena took hold of his brown cloak, as if she would draw him in.

"No; not Holyfield—not Wrexworth," he murmured, as if speaking to himself.

"Yes, you will, sailor, because I wish it," urged Lena.

"What can you say now?" asked Mr Fleming, who joined them at the wall.

"Oh! I yield," replied the sailor, opening the garden gate—"I never dispute your authority: do I, little lady."

Lena quietly drew him towards the verandah, and then, extending her hand towards Mrs Fleming, called—

“Mamma!”

“On my word, madam, I am a strange figure to come into your presence,” apologized the sailor, glancing at his rough dress.

“I think, Mr Hurst, we all keep you very well in countenance,” replied Mrs Fleming, in her gentle manner :—“we make ourselves very rustic here.”

Lena silently brought him a cup of coffee; and, while he drank it, she stood by him examining his cloak, which he had thrown down on a seat.

“This is Sicilian, is it not, sailor?” she asked.

“Palermitan, little lady: now I am at your orders,” said the sailor, putting down his cup.

“Sit by me, sailor,” said Lena.

“Of course,” replied the sailor: “I’m under your care.”

Mr and Mrs Fleming sat together; Hurst between Cecil and Lena. Cecil wrapped herself in her mantle, and leaned back in great state: people were not going to talk to her,

she was well aware, and 'therefore she should amuse herself with her own thoughts.

"And so, you were born in Italy?" observed Lena, inquiringly.

"Even so, little lady: at Naples. I had never seen England till a few months ago."

"I wonder how you learned to speak English."

"I believe I know Italian better."

"I wish I did."

"It is not worth knowing."

"For the sake of the literature," interposed Mrs Fleming.

"It is a poor literature, so far as I know," said Hurst: "there's nothing eminently useful in it."

"There are the historians," urged Mr Fleming.

"To record the paltry squabbles of a number of small societies," said the sailor; "nobody cares for them. I'll engage that few people recollect anything of the subject after reading Davila or Guicciardini: there's no

great public lesson to be learned from such histories."

"But Italy is surely rich in poets," pleaded Mrs Fleming.

"Ay, I grant you, madam, that is rather a luxury," said the sailor: "but poetry is the thing of all others the least necessary, because every one has poetry all around them. Every one can feel and see—which is the groundwork of poetry; but every one cannot think and reason; and therefore the valuable part of a country's literature is that which teaches men something they cannot know otherwise."

"Such as history, ethics, science in every branch," observed Mr Fleming.

"Just that, I think," replied Hurst.

"And yet I will venture to say that Mr Hurst is a great reader of poetry," remarked Mrs Fleming.

"I plead guilty, madam: I take it as some men take snuff," said the sailor; "but I don't insist on it as a necessary of life."

“Sailor, I don’t quite understand,” said Lena.

“Why, look there, little lady!” he exclaimed pointing to the sands, now streaked with rosy light by the rays of the setting sun: “what words, let you twist and rhyme them as you may, could do more than paint that scene beneath you? Every change in the clouds, every rustle of the wind, surpasses all words. What is the use, then, of poetry, when you have nature to look at?”

Lena’s large eyes, like lamps, were fixed upon him. “For sick people, and people shut up in towns, or—or ugly places,” she said, “to repeat to them these beautiful sights.”

“I tell you what, little lady,” he said, laughing, “the less you think the better, for the next half-dozen years: you have more brains already than ought to fall to your share.”

“Oh! sailor, the moon!” was Lena’s answer; for she never seized a compliment: she thought so little about herself.

“Not bad,” admitted the sailor: “but *we* have seen the moon in the Mediterranean.”

“Oh ! and such stars !” exclaimed Lena.

“Ah !—we have seen the stars, *noi altri*,” retorted the sailor.

Cecil felt very angry : when, as if to add insult to injury, the sailor began talking Italian to Lena; and Mr Fleming, who spoke the language fluently, joined in. Now Cecil found that learning the Italian grammar with Miss Penley was a very different thing from hearing it talked rapidly : she could not catch a single word they uttered.

At last they turned into a field, below which, in a sudden declivity, stood the roofless building; with tall ash trees and hawthorns growing within and without, and fragments of pillars, elaborately carved, scattered around, half hidden by fern and brambles. The east window, wrought like lace-work, was still nearly perfect. The moonlight touched it as with a silver pencil, illustrating Scott’s too well-known lines.

A few sheep were feeding on the slope, and their tinkling bells, breaking the stillness, sug-

gested the time when Wrexworth was a priory, and the chapel in the Holyfield resounded with the vesper chime and chant.

The sailor took off his hat as he passed beneath the arched entrance, and remained leaning silently against the wall, after having thrown his cloak on the fragment of a pillar, and invited Lena to take her seat upon it.

Mrs Fleming remained in the carriage ; Cecil and her uncle explored every part of the ruins together.

“ Sailor,” whispered Lena, after a pause, “ do you think this place is haunted ? ”

He started, and then sat down beside her.

“ Haunted ! of course it is : look beneath that east window.”

“ Ha ! sailor,” cried Lena, shuddering.

“ If it should chance to be moonlight about one in the morning, you would see a female figure in white, kneeling beneath the east window with her arms extended, as the Catholics sometimes do in sign of penance.”

“And who was she, and what had she done?” asked Lena eagerly.

“She was a daughter of Lord Wrexworth, the ancestor of the present duke; and she had married a person beneath her in rank: she ran off with the captain of his archers. After a time her husband treated her very badly, and she wished to return home; but her father would not forgive her—it is not the custom in that family—and one day she was found lying there, under the east window, dead. She was buried on the spot; for they did not think her fit company for the others in the family vault.”

“Do you think she destroyed herself?” whispered Lena.

“No; it was said that, being in the last stage of a consumption, she had attempted to reach her home, but had not been able to get farther than the chapel; where she died.”

“What a dreadful thing for her father!” exclaimed Lena.

“You need not waste your pity upon him,”

said the sailor, with a laugh that sounded rather bitter: "it is not in the family to be overwhelmed on such occasions."

"And what was her name, sailor?"

"Sybil Dawbeney, till she married. I never heard the name of the archer: possibly the earl took no pains to preserve it in the family records."

"And yet, sailor, though the earl was very cruel, I wonder—"

"What do you wonder, little lady?"

"How any one *can* marry without their parents' consent," said Lena.

"*La chose est faisible!* always supposing the parties are of age," replied the sailor, laughing.

"You should not laugh; for it is very wicked," said Lena, seriously.

"Take care, then, you never do it yourself, little lady," returned the sailor.

"Me! good gracious!"

"Suppose a baron were to offer to run away with you," suggested the sailor, still laughing.

"Certainly not," said Lena.

"An earl?"

"Oh! dear, no!"

"A duke?"

"It would be just the same," replied Lena, with a decided gesture of her hand.

"You have more conscience than Anne of Austria," observed the sailor, starting up.

"Tell me that story, sailor," cried Lena, following him.

"Ask your father what Mazarin said to Anne of Austria, and what she said to him again," returned the sailor.

"When you are a little older," said Mr Fleming.

Lena acquiesced patiently, as she always did; though she wished to hear the story.

"That's a remarkable anecdote you were telling Lena," said Mr Fleming, as they drove home: "it ought to be in the guide book."

"I had it from one of the family," said the sailor; "but I don't vouch for it."

“Don’t forget to-morrow, sailor,” pleaded Lena, as he was taking leave of the party.

“What’s to-morrow,” asked Mr Fleming.

“Sunday,” answered Lena.

“To-morrow I am at your orders, little lady; as I always am,” was the sailor’s reply.

“Certainly,” observed Mr Fleming, as they sat at supper, “that friend of yours, my little Lena, is a very striking person : there’s a dignity in his gestures quite surprising. As he stood in the chapel with his hat off, I could fancy a pilgrim revisiting the tombs of his fathers : he’s perfectly different from the people one meets. I should like to know his history.”

“You burn, uncle Fleming,” thought Cecil to herself, “but I shall say nothing : things may be found out some day or other, and then it will be seen whether I am right or not. A light flashed upon me when he said, in that peculiar tone, ‘they don’t forgive in that family.’ It is very well to take no notice of people, and not to see them even ; but they

may have eyes on their side, and ears too. I remember now, that day when Basil and I were getting the wager-boat ready for uncle Morland, he and uncle Ned were talking about the death of Lord Hurstmonceaux, of fever, at Genoa, with his wife. I hope that agrees with what the sailor told us! And uncle Ned said that the duke was on bad terms with him to the last, and that the grandson had disappeared, much to the duke's vexation. Oh! this is capital!—how uncle Ned would laugh! Shall I be amused watching all this? It will be just like a game of blind-man's buff, with the players all blinded, and me sitting with my eyes wide open looking on."

"Oh! look, uncle, here's Lena asleep on my shoulder," cried Cecil. "Wake up, darling, just till we get to the top of the stairs. Not much brushing and combing to-night, Mrs Dixon,—we are both tired out. I wonder whether we shall dream of the ghost!"

Mrs Fleming was not well enough to go to church the next day, and Mr Fleming took the

girls in the carriage ; for the church they attended, which was in the parish of Wrexworth, was beyond a walk. The cousins were dressed in worked muslin frocks, over blue silk slips, and little white chip bonnets, trimmed with pale blue ribbons. Cecil looked more brilliant than ever, the blue rosettes contrasting with her golden hair and apple-blossom complexion.

“I wonder whether your friend will keep his appointment, Lena?” said Mr Fleming, as they drew near the church.

Lena quietly nodded her head towards the churchyard gate, where the sailor was standing ready to hand her out.

“How fine we are to-day, little lady,” he said, stopping and surveying her from head to foot.

Lena sighed : fine clothes gave her no pleasure, and the India muslin robe and blue silk mantle represented to her only an extra amount of twitching, and snatching, and sharp hair-brushing from Mrs Dixon ; the only person who ever said a cross word to the little heiress.

Mr Fleming and Cecil went in first, then Lena and the sailor. He gave her a large cluster of the orange briar roses: she coloured like a sea-shell, with delight.

“And this is *our* prayer-book?” asked the sailor.

Lena nodded, and placed it between them.

“Whose pew is that opposite?” he asked.

Lena raised her eyes to the gallery, which was entirely taken up by a large pew, furnished with crimson velvet hangings and cushions.

“I don’t know,—it’s always empty,” she replied indifferently; and she began to look out the psalms for the day.

“It belongs to the Duke of Axminster,” said Mr Fleming.

The sailor made a gesture that did not escape Cecil, and let himself fall into his corner of the pew, as if he resigned himself to a disagreeable occurrence.

Whereas it gave Mr Fleming a solid pleasure to look up at the empty range of velvet chairs

that adorned the august gallery, and reflect to whom it belonged.

But on this auspicious Sunday, hardly had the first notes of the voluntary rolled from the organ, when the gallery door opened, and the whole party from Wrexworth filled up the front row of the pew.

The duke took his place at the head, then came Lady John and Sir Tressel, then the Dawbeney girls, with young Rothmond imprisoned between them.

Lady John Dawbeney was a tall unsightly woman, always badly dressed, with a large shapeless nose, and weak eyes, set very high in her head. Cecil's cheeks glowed with anger the moment she beheld her; for Lady John had extended to the children of her early friend the neglect with which she saw fit to treat the Morland family. But, as she observed confidentially to a friend, she knew the world too well to domesticate two beautiful girls in her house, with daughters of her own growing up. But

she was a very affectionate mother, and a most attentive wife to not the very best of husbands ; and if people will go on insisting on finding all the virtues in their acquaintance, it is not for want of daily experience to teach them better. Her daughters, frightfully dressed, and forbidding in appearance, forced themselves rudely into their chairs ; having signed young Rothmond into the seat between them, who took it with an air of shy terror very diverting to behold. They then deposited their books on the desk in front of them, and settled themselves as if in their private box at the French play.

Mr Fleming could not help glancing with some satisfaction at the two lovely children beside him, dressed with such simple elegance, and contrasting them with the high-born Dawbeney girls.

Lena looked up with unfeigned childish admiration at the duke ; whose beautiful head, surrounded with silver hair, was thrown into

strong relief by the red velvet curtain behind his chair.

Presently young Rothmond discovered Lena, and, though he was too well behaved to make her a sign, his features lighted up with pleasure.

The Dawbeney girls, who were staring at him with the most brazen effrontery—for they both thought him very beautiful—followed the direction of his gaze, and looked from Lena to Cecil with a sour expression: they were quite old enough to hate attraction in another person, even if it were in the matter of a muslin frock. They recognised Cecil, but took care not to betray any sign of intelligence in their regard. They made up for it by staring at the sailor (whom they spoke of afterwards as a handsome man) with the liveliest perseverance.

Cecil, a match for them in *sang froid*, let her half-closed eyes wander along the gallery and among the Saxon pillars of the church, as if all was to her equally new and indifferent. She

had time to observe, however, that the duke's double eyeglass was constantly directed to their pew ; and although she did not stand very low in her own esteem, she could not but perceive that, after a very cursory glance at the others, his gaze remained fixed on the sailor, — the severe outline of whose features, particularly that strong development of the brows which is said to mark a resolute will, repeated those of the duke with marvellous exactness.

Whether he was aware of the interest he excited, Cecil could hardly tell ; for he followed the movement of Lena's little finger through the service with the steadiest perseverance ; while, during the intervals of the prayers, he remained leaning back, with that blank expression of eye which is said to belong to the high and the low when they have no intention of depicting their thoughts, but which is a finesse of countenance entirely beyond the intervening classes.

As they were coming out of church, young

Rothmond found means to evade his cousins, and to make his way to Lena.

"We come back to the hotel to-morrow," he said; "I am so glad: I can walk with you on the sands every day."

"Do," said Lena.

"Who is that with you?" he asked.

"Don't you know?—the nice sailor who carried me home the day I fell in the sea."

"Oh! to be sure—what's his name."

"Hurst."

"How very odd—he's so like my grandfather."

"Dear! do you think so?"

Here the eldest Dawbeney ran towards her cousin, screaming that the carriage was waiting, and her grandpapa wondered where he was.

The Flemings waited for their carriage till the duke's party had driven off.

Cecil heard the duke say to Mr Rothmond—

"Who were those people, my dear, you were speaking to as you came out of the church?"

Sir Tressel answered shortly for him—

“People he found on the sands, named Holland,” I believe.

“Fleming,” said Mr Rothmond, colouring scarlet.

The Dawbeney girls burst out laughing.

The carriage drove off; Cecil coloured as deeply as Mr Rothmond.

“What’s the matter, signorina?” asked the sailor.

He addressed her so seldom that she coloured still more.

“Something those odious girls did to annoy me,” she replied, stepping forward to the carriage.

The sailor managed to preserve a grave countenance, though he looked very much inclined to laugh.

“Let us take you to the brow of the cliff,” said Mr Fleming.

He accepted. Lena signed him as usual beside her.

"I thought you knew the Dawbeneys," said Mr Fleming to Cecil.

"I make a point of cutting them everywhere," she replied, in a clear, keen tone, just like her uncle Ned.

"Why?" asked Lena.

"Because they are insolent," she replied.

The sailor laughed out.

"They are very near neighbours of her uncle, Lord Morland," said Mr Fleming to the sailor.

"A great deal too near," replied Cecil.

Hurst fixed his brilliant eyes on Cecil with a smile. He seemed amused by her manner.

"They are not very beautiful," he remarked at last.

"The duke is very beautiful," said Lena.

"Oh! you think so, little lady?"

"Don't you?"

"Not at all."

"Well, I shall come to see you to-morrow,

sailor," said Lena, as he was getting out of the carriage.

"I hope you may be able to keep all your appointments," he said, laughing: "you make so many—I heard you, with that handsome young spark, coming out of church. But I shall expect you, remember."

She looked simply at him, and then made him a sign with her bouquet of roses, as he turned the corner of the hill.

CHAPTER XI.

But there ben folk of swiche condition,
That whan they han a certain purpos take,
They cannot stint of hir entencion,
But right as they were bounden to a stake,
They wol not of hir firste purpos slake.

CHAUCER.

“IF I were you, Lena, I should not be too much flattered by master Rothmond scampering after his father in that way,” said Cecil, looking with haughty eyelids after the young gentleman who had been gathering seaweed with them during the morning, and had suddenly broken off on finding that it was the hour at which he had promised his father to return. “At least, that’s not my idea of good manners.”

Lena let down her basket, and looked quite bewildered into Cecil’s face.

“He’s so fond of his father,” she said at last.

“Mighty fond,” retorted Cecil, drily. “I don’t admire such fondness. I hate Sir Tressel, for my part: the Axminster lot are bad enough, but Sir Tressel is worse than all.

“Why?” asked Lena.

“Oh! you could not understand: but *I* know. As uncle Ned says, men of his rank, when they *are* proud, are fifty thousand times more insufferable than any duke in the kingdom.”

“I don’t understand those things,” said Lena, squeezing the seaweed into her basket; “but I suppose it is a good thing to be a lord.”

“Sir Tressel is not a lord,” said Cecil; “he is an insolent man.—Holland, indeed!”

Cecil had been chafing over the little scene at the church door ever since: the laughter of the Dawbeney girls yet rang in her ears.

“Here’s papa,” said Lena.

“Well, are you ready? Shall we go and see the sailor?” asked Mr Fleming.

“Yes, papa ; Cecil will come too.”

Cecil, whose curiosity was aroused with regard to the sailor, expressed herself willing to join them.

He was working at his vessel ; he threw down his tools and came to meet them.

“Well, have you seen your friend this morning, or is that pleasure to come ?” he asked of Lena.

“Oh ! he has been with us all the morning,” she replied.

“I tell you I’m jealous of him,” said the sailor.

“Why, sailor ?” asked Lena.

He laughed. Lena went up to the vessel.

“You have done all this since I was here last,” she said. “I shall be sorry when it is finished, for then you will go.”

“I have the greatest mind to take you with me.”

“Not without papa !”

“There’s not room for papa.”

“Then I can’t come.”

“You won’t always say that, little lady,” returned the sailor.

“No, indeed,” said Mr Fleming with a half sigh.

“*Le bon temps viendra*,” said the sailor, laughing at Lena’s puzzled countenance.

“I shall go up and talk to Giovanna,” said Lena, observing the old woman knitting in the verandah of the châlet.

“I will stay here, for I can’t talk to her,” said Cecil, seating herself on a rock. Mr Fleming and the sailor sat down near her.

“Oh!—by the way,” said Mr Fleming, “you know something of the family of the Duke of Axminster.”

“Who, I?”—returned the sailor, quickly.

“I thought you said the other night you had heard that history from one of his family.”

“Oh!—ay—I have met them abroad.”

“What a very sad affair that was about his eldest son!” said Mr Fleming. “I heard some

people talking about it in the library this morning."

"What was that?" asked the sailor.

"Only that the duke has been as unlucky in his family as the ancestor you were telling us about; with this difference, that instead of a daughter it was his son, who married against his will."

"I can't see how any man can marry to please another," said the sailor. "I can't imagine two people looking with the same eyes on such a step."

"In our rank those matters are very easily arranged," said Mr Fleming; "but the eldest son of a duke! I can understand his father's mortification."

"I dare say," replied the sailor.

"Was it a marriage, I wonder?" inquired Mr Fleming.

"Why—Lord John is not recognised as the marquis," said the sailor.

"True!—it must have been," said Mr Flem-

ing. "And then they say the grandson causes the duke so much anxiety."

"Infinite," said the sailor, coolly.

"Do you know any harm of him?" asked Cecil, who was completely puzzled by the carelessness of the sailor's manner.

"I know good and bad of him, as of other people," he answered, with the same indifference.

"And what had he done to offend the duke?" asked Cecil.

"He was born, and he didn't die," replied the sailor, idly throwing pebbles towards the sea.

"I suppose the duke is anxious that Lord John should succeed him," said Mr Fleming: "he is certainly a most aristocratic person."

"I don't know him," said the sailor.

Cecil made something of a grimace.

"What is your advice on the subject, signorina?" asked the sailor.

"I dislike Lord and Lady John heartily," she exclaimed; for she could never hear their names

with composure. "I think he is a poor creature: it is pitiable to see him on horseback. And she is a spiteful, cold-hearted woman. She has made herself hated in the country, and I am glad of it."

"My dear Cecil!" remonstrated Mr Fleming, half laughing.

"Yes, uncle—it's true!" Cecil affirmed. "As I said to Lena this morning, I detest the whole Dawbeney set!"

She stopped, for she caught the sailor's eyes fixed on her with a smile, as if to say, "all of them?" and, remembering her suspicions, she coloured crimson.

Mr Fleming laughed at her vehemence. The sailor went on throwing pebbles.

"By the way, talking of the grandson, I wonder where he is now?" said Mr Fleming.

"Who knows!—perhaps at Grand Cairo," replied the sailor.

"What are you talking about?" asked Lena, who came down from the *châlet* at the moment.

Cecil looked anxiously at the sailor to see what he would answer.

"Talking about the heir of Wrexworth, as they say in the romances," replied the sailor, with a laugh—

"Is it a story?—tell it me," said Lena, sitting down beside him.

"How did you get on with Giovanna," asked the sailor. "She begins telling her beads directly you come in sight, as if you were a second St Catherine"—

"But the story, sailor."

He looked at her for a moment, and then said, laughingly, "The Silent Woman—too bad of Ben Jonson!"

"Why?" asked Mr Fleming.

"Don't you know?—the silent woman turns out to be a boy."

"You are the only person to whom Lena is not silent," said Mr Fleming.

"How 's that, little lady?" asked the sailor.

Lena looked at him with a very puzzled ex-

pression, and at last shook her head. She could not tell, as none of us can tell, why we find it easy to talk to some people, and not to others.

“Is that your servant,” asked the sailor, as a man dressed in black advanced towards them with a letter in his hand.

“No,” replied Lena, “he is coming to you.”

The man, after hesitating a moment between Hurst and Mr Fleming, turned to the former, and asked him, respectfully, “if he was the gentleman who lived in that cottage,” pointing to the chalet.

He assented, with some little surprise.

The man then offered him the letter, and “begged to know whether he was to wait for an answer.”

The sailor glanced at the direction, and replied, briefly “Some mistake—it is not for me.”

“I hope, sir, you will excuse me,” said the man, lowering his voice, “but I was directed by his grace to leave that letter in the hands of the

gentleman residing here, whatever name he might bear."

The sailor seized the letter and crushed it in his hand, saying, with an impatient gesture,

"Very well—that's enough: you have done your errand."

"And no answer, sir?" asked the servant.

"No reply whatever!" he exclaimed, impetuously.

The man, looking as if he expected the earth to open and swallow them both for this act of audacity, bowed, and withdrew.

Hurst threw himself down on the beach close to Lena, and employed himself in tearing the letter into pieces, without having opened it, after having carefully examined the seal.

"That's all your doing, little lady," he said at last.

"Mine, sailor!" exclaimed Lena, looking at him with wondering eyes.

"Yours," he replied, scattering the last pieces of paper towards the sea.

"I don't understand," said Lena.

"And I can't explain," he replied.

"I think, sailor, you are in a wicked temper," said Lena, after a pause.

"I think I am, little lady," he replied, laughing, and starting up. "Come, what shall we do?"

"Walk home with us," said Lena.

"What, you are friends with me, then?" he asked.

It was all as clear as daylight to Cecil: she only wondered how her uncle Fleming could be so blind.

Hurst was supporting Lena over the rocks. She skimmed like a fairy from one fragment to another, stopping when any piece of seaweed attracted her eye. Hurst was never weary of gathering what she fancied, and twenty times, on their road, they would come to a halt, empty the little basket, and pack it with fresh treasures dripping from the sea.

"Oh, sailor, look at my frock!" said Lena at last, glancing with dismay at her wet dress.

"It will not give you cold."

"No, but Dixon will be so cross with me."

"Ah, Giovanna will not be cross with me,"
said the sailor.

"Then, I hope, you are never cross with her?"
retorted Lena.

"I should think not," he replied.

"How they get on!" said Mr Fleming to Cecil: "he must be very fond of children."

They were close to the house. Lena stopped and looked up at her companion.

"Sailor, what was it that you said was all my doing?" she asked.

"Taking me to church, little lady," he replied.

"And why did you tear the letter?"

"Because I was angry."

"Did you know who it came from?"

"Perfectly."

"And you won't tell me?"

"Oh, I will, if you will promise not to tell again."

Lena promised ; the sailor bent down and whispered to her.

"There, now, we have a secret between us, little lady," he said, laughing.

"Upon my word, I don't know what to say to all this," said Mr Fleming, gaily.

"I don't know what that handsome young fellow will say to it," said Hurst.

"Ay, we shall have a duel," said Mr Fleming.

Lena never could understand this kind of banter ; she looked from one to the other, her eyes growing large as stars.

Mrs Fleming appeared at the window, holding out a letter to Cecil.

"Oh, it's from uncle Ned," said Cecil, opening it ; "he's coming to-morrow or next day. Oh ! I'm glad, and sorry too, for he will take me back to Thornley."

"I don't know how we can spare you," said Mr Fleming ; "we must persuade Mr Morland to stay as long as we can. Lord Morland's brother,—a most delightful person," he added, for the benefit of the sailor.

Cecil always winced at these remarks. Like many girls, who are much with uncles and cousins, she knew a good deal about the opinions of men; and Mr Fleming's solicitude about people of rank was, she knew, the very thing they would most ridicule.

Lena looked very dismal, and followed her cousin up stairs with drooping head.

Cecil threw aside her bonnet, and hugged her little cousin in her arms.

"I shall be so sorry to go! But never mind, Lena, we shall meet again: Uncle Ned will take care of that."

Lena returned her caress with tearful eyes.

"Oh! what was it the sailor told you?" asked Cecil.

"I may not tell," said Lena; "and I want so much to ask you something—I will never have a secret again!"

CHAPTER XII.

Don Cæsar.—De vos bienfaits je n'aurai nulle envie,
Tant que je trouverai vivant ma libre vie
Aux fontaines de l'eau, dans les champs le grand air ;

Adieu ! donc—de nous deux Dieu sait quel est le juste.

V. HUGO.

LENA had eyes for no one but Cecil the next morning. Mr Rothmond and his Newfoundland dog were loitering about the rocks in vain ; she stood beside her cousin with a sad perseverance : even the sailor came up to the garden wall without her perceiving him, and Mr Fleming went out, with his newspaper in his hand, to ask him in.

“Lena !” called Mr Fleming.

She went down hand in hand with Cecil to

the gate. There was a strain of distant music coming slowly nearer, as if the west wind bore it towards the sea.

“Something for you to look at, little lady,” said the sailor; “let me lift you on the wall.”

“Mr Hurst very kindly stopped to tell you of this procession,” said Mr Fleming, “which he overtook as he returned from D——.”

“Oh, how very good! where’s Cecil?” exclaimed Lena, kneeling on the wall, supported by the sailor.

“Here I am; what is it?” asked Cecil.

“Only a troop of equestrians,” said Hurst.

While they were speaking, a procession came in sight, rising over the brow of the hill, and winding along down the rugged highway. First came a line of camels led by attendants supposed to be Bedouin Arabs; then horsemen and women dressed in all kinds of spangled costumes; then a gilt car, where enormous brazen dragons with red mouths seemed to uphold a crimson canopy, beneath which reclined an In-

dian prince, with a pipe in coils of crimson and gold, as large as a boa constrictor. This extravagant vehicle was drawn by two elephants, one being of enormous size, on whose necks Indian drivers were seated, with iron goads to direct their course; while keepers in the same Eastern disguise walked at the head of each animal, leading them by their enormous ears.

Behind the car came another fanciful conveyance filled with musicians, all dressed in the most outrageous costumes. Some of these, when they passed, threw handbills to the party, containing a list of their performances, together with the announcement that the elephants were to be brought down to bathe in the sea that evening at sunset.

Lena gazed with all her eyes as long as they were in sight. She imagined it a procession from the "Arabian Nights"—Haroun Al Raschid taking an airing.

Mr Fleming decided on not taking them to see the horsemanship. "There would be a

crowd of all sorts of people," he remarked to Hurst; "and he really could not answer it to Lady Morland to take her niece to a show of that kind."

Cecil bit her lips; she dreaded her uncle making any allusion to the Morland side of the house.

"Oh, do stay with us, and see the elephants bathe!" pleaded Lena.

Mr Fleming joined his entreaties to those of Lena.

"We are just going to our early dinner," he urged: "if you have no engagements, why not lounge away the afternoon here? I have a box of reviews and novels just come down, and Lena shall cut the leaves for you."

There was no resisting this invitation; but, instead of cutting leaves, the sailor happened to discover Lena's concertina, when they adjourned to the drawing-room, and asked her to play; and when she had exhausted all her simple tunes, and he had told her fifty times that she

played like a mermaid, he asked her to teach him the notes.

They were sitting together on a sofa, at one side of the open window. The rocks below, and the sea tossing its foam among them at high tide, were all in a blaze of sunlight, enhancing the shade and the breezy coolness of the room.

Cecil was working with her aunt at a table opposite, but a strange attraction kept her constantly observing her cousin. She had such pretty childish ways of teaching, and the sailor's manner to her was so caressing, that it was a struggle in Cecil's mind not to feel envious.

But she was a generous girl, and she was, moreover, used to manage herself; which no one since her mother's death had ever done for her.

"Why should I grudge her being liked and attended to," she asked herself, "if she is more pleasant than I am? I am sure, she is more good. Why should not people take more notice of her?"

She tried to keep her eyes on her embroidery.

"There, I shall never learn it," said the sailor, giving Lena back her concertina.

"But you have no patience, sailor."

"And you have so much."

"Listen, have you heard the Greek sailors sing this chant?" asked Lena, playing another air.

"Yes, often."

"Why do you look at me, sailor?" said she, simply.

"Because you have a face like the Virgin—the Star of the Sea!"

"Oh! what a pretty name!"

"Is it not?"

"Sailor," she said, lowering her voice, "do you know the duke?"

"Never saw him in my life."

"Yes, at church."

"True: never but that once."

"Then why did he write to you?"

"That is best known to himself, little lady."

"You would have known if you had read his letter, perhaps?"

"I wish I could make it all out," said Lena.

"Ah! there I'm stranded, little lady. I cannot explain it to you; it's a long story. Show me again how you play that chant."

"I can tell you something else," he said, after a while. "The sun is going down, and the tide is out, and you will soon have the elephants here."

Lena started up joyfully, and ran to put on her hat and cloak.

The number of people collected on this occasion was quite surprising: it was not easy to imagine where they all came from. Several carriages from the neighbourhood were filled with children, whom their parents had brought to see the elephants, and were drawn up in a line on the road that passed the villa. Lena and Cecil were seated on the low stone wall at the bottom of the garden, Mr Fleming and the sailor standing beside them. Mrs Fleming was seated in an arm-chair near the gate, carefully

wrapped in a large shawl. Lena was in that quiet ecstasy which any little pleasure was certain to produce in her mind: her luminous eyes were constantly directed along the road to watch for the elephants.

"Well, little lady, are they coming?" Hurst asked her.

"Not yet," she whispered.

"That is Sir Tressel Rothmond's carriage," said Mr Fleming, as it drew near the villa.

Mr Rothmond stopped the postilions, and spoke to his father; evidently about the Fleming party.

Sir Tressel smiled rather compassionately, as if he thought him very childish, and gave him a little push on the shoulder. The boy sprang out of the carriage, without waiting for the steps to be let down. Sir Tressel started forward, half frightened; Mr Rothmond turned round and laughed at him, and the carriage drove on.

"So you are on the look-out for the elephants," said Mr Rothmond to Lena; "they

will pass close to you : shall you not be afraid ?”

“No,” replied Lena.

“Because I am here to take care of you ?”

“And papa, and Mr Hurst.”

“And I.”

“You too. Sailor, I wish they would come.”

Hurst went out into the road to look for them.

“They are just in sight, little lady,” he said at last. Lena clapped her hands.

The elephants now came slowly up the road, led by their Indian attendants. The first was an immense creature, vast and misshapen, like some antediluvian being ; the other, two or three feet shorter than his companion.

The sailor and Mr Rothmond were outside the wall, and Lena wanted them to come in, for fear the elephants should step on them. They laughed at her fears : Hurst would not move, but she persuaded Mr Rothmond to sit beside her on the wall.

It was now low tide, and there was a great

crowd of common people on the sands. The elephants went down the rocky beach orderly enough, but as soon as they touched the sand they broke away from their keepers, and trotted briskly to the sea, the people screaming and scattering in all directions. It was a stately sight to see them walk till the water reached their shoulders, and then, with a solemn bend forward, breast the waves, sinking till nothing but a round black mass appeared above the water, marking the position of their heads, with the end of the trunk raised far out in front. You might suppose a cask floating just on the surface of the sea, as those huge heads moved slowly onward. The keepers, in boats, with their goads kept heading the animals, that they might not go out too far from land.

“Did you ever see an elephant before, signorina?” asked Hurst, who was leaning on the wall between Rothmond and Lena.

“No; but the pictures are so like them, that I don’t feel as if I was seeing anything new,” replied Cecil.

"I have seen camels before," said Lena, "but not elephants. I should like to see an alpaca: papa has a picture of them at home."

"What are they like?" asked Cecil.

"Not like a sheep, nor like a goat, nor like a deer," said Mr Fleming; "a sort of nondescript fleecy animal, that takes Lena's fancy amazingly: she is always wishing for an alpaca."

"Where are they to be had, little lady?" asked the sailor.

"In South America," replied Lena.

"Why, that's rather far to go for a pet," said Hurst.

As they were talking, a carriage and four, with outriders, dashed down the road, and drew up suddenly, just beneath the wall.

Cecil recognised at a glance the silver hair of the Duke of Axminster, and her old enemies the Dawbeney girls: they had persuaded their grandfather to bring them all the way from Wrexworth to see the elephants.

"There! I do believe it's all over—I knew we should be too late!" exclaimed Adela.

“Grandpapa was so long taking his nap,” said Emily, laughing.

“Where are they? Oh! in the sea, I declare,” said Adela, peevishly; “and I wanted to look at them close.”

“In the sea, are they?” said Emily; “it’s all one to me, I only wanted the drive.”

The duke, leaning far back in the carriage, appeared not to hear or see anything that was passing. Some people, who knew him by sight, paid him the respect of taking off their hats as they went by; and then he raised his thin white hand mechanically to his hat, in return for their salutation.

Mr Rothmond, directly he beheld his fair cousins, slid off the wall, and went to sit on the grass close by Mrs Fleming’s chair; where he was screened from observation by the rest of the party. Lena was about to call to him, but he made her an imploring sign: he had a ludicrous horror of those girls.

The Misses Dawbeney were now so very close

to Cecil that they could not fail to perceive her ; and she observed them whispering to each other and glancing at her.

She had no mind to court their notice, and with the utmost indifference, she busied herself in looking through Mr Fleming's opera-glass at the elephants, who were now beginning to spout a shower of water through their trunks. To her surprise, Hurst began to talk fast to her ; as some people do when embarrassed by the presence of another person whom they do not care to recognise. She observed, too, that the duke was now sitting upright, and looking earnestly at Hurst through his double eye-glass. She felt more assured than ever of his relationship to the duke, and she waited with eager curiosity to see what would come next.

Hurst took the opera-glass from her hand, and adjusted it.

"A telescope would do better, signorina," he said : "can you look through a telescope?"

"Yes, I have learned since I have been

here," said Cecil, "but Lena cannot: she sees only her eyelashes."

"They are too long, little lady," said Hurst, leaning across to Lena.

"How would it be if I cut them, mamma?" said Lena.

"Oh! my dearest, your eyelashes! what would papa say?" exclaimed Mrs Fleming.

"Don't you know they are a beauty?" asked Hurst.

"They are in my way sometimes: they get into my eyes," said Lena, quietly.

At that moment one of the duke's footmen came up to Hurst, and, touching his hat, said that his grace begged to speak with him a moment.

Cecil, who had never seen Hurst anything but perfectly frank and good humoured in his manners, was astonished at the haughty air with which he replied,—

"The duke mistakes me for some other person. I have not the honour of his acquaintance."

The man went back, and Hurst turned completely away from the duke's carriage, and began to talk to Mr Fleming, who was standing within the wall.

Cecil watched the duke as the footman gave him Hurst's answer. He sank back again, and dropped down his eyeglass with a disappointed air. The curiosity of his amiable grand-daughters was very much excited.

"La! that's the handsome man we saw in the church!"

"Do you know him, grandpapa?"

"Did you send him a message by Evans?"

"Do you know his name?"

"What a fine figure he has!"

They attacked the duke on either side with these questions, without caring the least to lower their voices so that the sailor might not hear them.

"There! there! my dears—never mind: it does not concern you!" said the duke, irritably. Then, taking a sudden resolution, he

called the servant again, had the steps let down, and got out of the carriage.

Cecil was sitting with her face towards the duke, Hurst looking the other way. To her childish fancy the duke had the look of a despotic sovereign, as he came slowly forward : he possessed in an eminent degree that air of race which the French writers seem to appreciate so keenly, and which still lingers in some few English families of condition.

Cecil made the sailor a little sign, and said, in a low tone, "The duke is coming towards you, Mr Hurst."

He suddenly flushed, and knit his brows ; and then, with that peculiar manner she had never seen before, he turned slowly round and faced the duke, waiting for him to speak. The duke began : "Allow me to name myself to you, sir, as the Duke of Axminster. I believe I have the pleasure of speaking to a very near relation."

He meant to be conciliating, but Hurst replied in the same unbending manner :

“Your grace has been misinformed: I desire to claim no connexion whatever with your house.”

“Sir,” said the duke, “this is not a time to enter into any discussion on the subject. You will do me a favour if you will call upon me at your earliest convenience.”

“My station and my habits equally unfit me for such an honour,” said Hurst, growing more stately at every word; “and as I have no claims to urge upon your grace, you will permit me to decline your proposal.”

He had taken off his hat when he began to speak to the duke; he now replaced it, as if to close the conference.

Cecil had forgotten all about the elephants in the interest of the scene; but just as Hurst finished speaking, the largest elephant, who had been irritated at having his bath interrupted (for his keepers had driven him out of the sea with their prongs), set off at full speed up the road, with his trunk in the air, uttering a

succession of horrible explosions, in sign of anger.

“ Oh ! Mr Hurst—the elephant ! ” cried Cecil.

She was just in time : the animal was almost at the duke’s shoulder. Hurst threw open the wicket, and drew the duke within the gate. At the same moment the horses in the carriage reared and plunged violently. Hurst and Mr Fleming rushed towards them at the same moment, but the horses turned sharp round, and overturned the carriage on the side of the bank.

The girls behaved with great spirit. Emily, whose nerves were about the consistence of packthread, did nothing but laugh ; and Adela sat with closed lips and a white face, resolving not to utter a sound. There was a dead silence for a minute ; then Hurst appeared above the bank, carrying Adela, and Mr Fleming with Emily hanging on his arm. The duke had fallen into Mrs Fleming’s arm-chair, which she offered him when he was so unceremoniously hurried

into her garden. The two girls rushed up to him and kissed him, both at the same time.

"We are not much hurt, grandpapa," said Emily. "Were you frightened?"

"Very much, my dear," was the duke's answer.

"My shoulder pains me; and all down my arm," said Adela.

"Pray allow me to look at it: I may do something to relieve you," said Mrs Fleming.

Lena, with her wistful eyes, had come up to see if she could be of any use.

"There—go, my dear," said the duke: "this lady will be so kind as to look to you."

"For my part, I thought it great fun," said Emily, lingering behind for a moment. "One of the postilions is stunned, but not Joseph: the one with the black eyes."

"Eyes!" exclaimed the duke, looking indignantly at his granddaughter. "What business have you to know that a postilion has eyes?"

"I wonder how he could see to drive us without," she muttered, turning to follow her sister:

then suddenly looking back, she said, "I suppose it's beneath me to ask what has become of that good-looking sailor, who so politely came to our assistance: nobody is to be handsome but dukes and marquises;" and with this graceful retort she left the room.

"True," said the duke, suddenly rising; "that young man, the sailor to whom I was speaking—will you do me the favour to let him know I desire to see him?"

Mr Fleming went out into the verandah, but he was gone.

"If I could be of any use in sending a message to Mr Hurst," suggested Mr Fleming.

"Thank you; I think I'll write," said the duke. "And yet—no—we must meet."

He put aside the writing materials Mr Fleming had laid before him, and remained leaning his head on his hand. Mr Fleming went again to the verandah.

"Why, Fleming, what's the matter here?" said a voice from the darkness. "Whose carriage is this blocking up the road?"

“Is that Mr Morland?” asked the duke—
“the very man I most wished to see!”

“Anything I can do for your grace,” said Mr Morland, coming in through the verandah—
“by the way, I trust you are not hurt?”

“Not at all,” said the duke; “but I am anxious to consult you on the old affair. Can you return with me to Wrexworth.”

“Why—if Fleming will not think me too cool,” said Mr Morland.

Mr Fleming was eager to assure Mr Morland that he should be happy to yield him to the Duke of Axminster. He had now an opportunity of seeing two persons of the privileged class together—of observing how they moved and spoke: he looked on, entranced.

The duke took Mr Morland’s arm, and led him to the window.

“He is here: it seems he goes by the name of Hurst. I saw him by the merest accident at Wrexworth church,” said the duke.

“I hope you liked his looks,” said Mr Morland.

“He is singular ; but he has the Dawbeney face,” replied the duke.

“A will of his own, then,” said Mr Morland, laughing.

The duke made a gesture, as if it was past all expression.

Meanwhile, Mrs Fleming, having taken the young ladies to her dressing-room, was attending to Adela’s shoulder, which was somewhat bruised.

“Well, is there much the matter?” asked Emily, coming in a little after the others. “Oh ! Cecil, how do you do ? I fancied I saw you, but I was not sure.”

Cecil touched Emily’s extended hand.

“Dear me, to be sure, it’s Cecil !” exclaimed Adela, looking towards her : “have you left Lady Morland ?”

“As you see,” returned Cecil ; not much pleased with the tone of her young acquaintance, which much resembled the way she might have put the same question to a lady’s-maid.

Lena stood by with a pitying face, holding the balsam and Spanish wool for her mother.

"You are an heiress, are you not?" asked Emily, turning suddenly towards her.

"An heiress?" exclaimed Lena, opening wide her gray eyes.

"My little girl does not understand you," remarked Mrs Fleming.

"She will understand well enough one day!" returned Emily, laughing.

"Who's that knocking?" asked Adela.

It was Mrs Dixon, who came to say that the carriage was ready, and that the duke begged to know if Miss Adela was well enough to go home.

"Oh yes, say I'm coming—here, stay—please fasten my dress first. Thank you a thousand times," she added, turning to Mrs Fleming with precisely the voice and manner she had used to the maid; "you have really made me quite comfortable."

"I'm sure we're excessively obliged to you," added Emily, taking the lead down stairs.

“Come, Adela, make haste: grandpapa is getting into the carriage!”

He was very welcome to get in, as far as Cecil was concerned; but she was not so well pleased to see her uncle Ned get in after him, before she could reach the garden gate.

He made her a friendly sign with his hand; but she was not so easily appeased: she was very dignified all the evening.

CHAPTER XIII.

PEN.—Are we gods,
Allied to no infirmities?—are our natures
More than men's natures?—when we slip a little
Out of the way of virtue, are we lost?—
Is there no medicine called sweet mercy?
PET.—Forgiveness meets with all faults.

BONDUCA.

“WELL, I think this poor room was honoured last night!” said Mr Fleming, when they met at breakfast the next morning. “The Duke of Axminster sitting in that very arm-chair!”

“I hope I may use it all the same: it's a pet of mine,” answered Mrs Fleming, who was more intent on extracting a prawn from its shell than in recalling the glories of the preceding day.

“I wonder how soon uncle Ned will come

from Wrexworth," said Cecil, who had not quite recovered her composure.

"Perhaps this note may tell us," replied Mr Fleming, taking one which his servant brought on a salver. "I think it is Mr Morland's hand."

"Read, papa!" exclaimed Lena.

Mr Fleming read:—

My dear Sir,

I am off for Staffa this morning, as I have no mind for a second interview with the Duke of Axminster. My only regret is that I cannot take leave of you and Mrs Fleming in person. Make my adieux to your beautiful children, and believe me,

Faithfully yours,

HURSTMONCEAUX.

Mr Fleming read the signature as if it had been written in capital letters, and fell back in his chair.

“Dear me!” exclaimed Mrs Fleming, “he means to go to Staffa!”

Lena looked out of the window, and, after a little trembling of the lip, began stealthily to wipe her eyes.

“Hurstmonceaux!” repeated Mr Fleming, still gazing on the leaf of paper that had dropped on his plate.

“Yes;” remarked Cecil, carelessly, “I always imagined that was about his standing. You know I told you so, Lena, the first time we saw him.”

Lena could not answer.

“Why, my little Lena,” exclaimed Mrs Fleming, putting her arm round her.

“Oh! she will see her friend again one day,” said Mr Fleming, in a joyous tone. “My dear,” he added in a low voice to his wife, “singular, is it not?—You could not but observe the notice he always took of her. More strange things have come about, eh?”

Mrs Fleming smiled, and gently shook her head.

“Uncle Ned at last!” cried Cecil, going towards him, with rather a stately air.

“At last!” repeated Mr Morland; “why, I’ve breakfasted, and come all the way from Wrexworth: I think myself very early.”

Mr Fleming was very earnest in his inquiries after the duke.

“I believe he is pretty well: I did not see him this morning. We are to take Wrexworth on our way home, Cis, for a day or two; and Lady John is coming to call on you to-day, my dear Mrs Fleming, with something of a petition for the little Madonna.”

Lena looked frightened. Mr Fleming was almost in paradise.

He had some business to transact, he told Mr Morland, which would take him about an hour, after which he would be quite at his service.

“Don’t hurry,” said Mr Morland, “I’ll take a walk with my niece. Run, Cis, and put on your bonnet.”

Cecil dressed with much satisfaction: her

uncle would now see her looking as she ought to do. She tied on her broad hat, and ran gaily down the steps.

Her uncle turned and confronted her as they stood together close to the shallow waves.

“Well, Cis, you are looking hearty,” he said.

“Hearty!” she echoed. Her face grew crimson with indignation.

“A little sun-burned,” he added; “but you have grown a foot: if you don’t take care, child, you will out-top me.”

Her smiles came back at this remark.

“I’m sure I don’t wish to go to Wrexworth, uncle,” she said, when they had walked a little farther.

“Ay, you did not wish to come here,” he returned; “yet you seem to have made it out pretty comfortably.”

“So I have, uncle: I am very glad I came *now*. I love Lena,—oh! a great deal better than Lou and Hen.”

“Do you?—that’s odd,” he said smiling.

"I did not know, uncle, that you were acquainted with the Duke of Axminster."

"It's possible I may know two or three people whom I have not spoken to you about," he returned, laughing.

"But, uncle, I like you to tell me everything."

"Very well : first tell *me* how came Fleming to know Lord Hurstmonceaux ?"

Cecil told him.

"So far so good ; and where is he now ?"

"Gone to Staffa this morning," replied Cecil.

"Slipped his cable !" exclaimed Mr Morland, with a gesture of disappointment.

"Literally, uncle : gone off in a little yacht that he built himself."

"That *he* built ?—is the man a shipwright ?"

"That he helped to build. Oh ! there was such a scene last night between him and the duke !"

"So I hear."

"I know all about it."

"Little pitchers," remarked her uncle.

"Now, sit down, uncle, and tell me the whole history."

"Which you know."

"Yes, it will amuse me to hear the particulars : I only know the outline."

They sat down on the beach.

"It lies in a nutshell, Cis. The late marquis chose to marry his tutor's daughter ; so the duke cut him off with a shilling : that is, with five hundred a-year ; thinking, very properly, such was exactly the income suited to the rank of life he had entered."

"I thought it was the woman, and not the man, uncle, whose rank was altered by marriage," said Cecil.

"Mostly : but the duke liked to take the other view ; and if you ever should become intimate with that family, you will find they are very apt to have and to hold their own ideas on every subject."

"Well, uncle—"

"Well, they both went to Italy upon their

marriage: for, though I think the duke was very handsome, considering all things, five hundred a-year is not exactly the sum to make a figure on in London; especially if you are a duke's eldest son."

"And did he not try to be reconciled?"

"Oh yes!—all *selon les règles*. After having indulged his own wishes to the utmost, thwarted all his father's plans, and allied him to a clan of tradespeople—for the tutor was the gentleman of his family—he says, 'Now that I have quite accomplished my own desires, I am very ready to comply with all yours; and I hope you will forgive and forget.'"

"And so he ought, you know, uncle."

"So he would, if his son had set to work in the proper way; but the marquis went on boring with his attempts for the first year or two, and then gave it up in despair. I told him to do just the contrary; when, after a few years, the duke would have been only too happy to come to terms; but just when his irritation was strongest—How-

ever, Cis, it's as well for you to know that people always act in this manner ; and, of course, they reap the consequences."

"And now they both are dead," said Cecil.

"Ay, Cis ; and see how the whirligig of time brings about his revenges," said Mr Morland, laughing. "The duke wants to come round, now. His son's death shocked him, and the wife's, I suppose, pleased him, and in this softened frame he wanted to embrace his grandson ; but the grandson won't be embraced. Things always fall out so."

"And how do you come to be mixed up in this affair, uncle ?"

"Why, it chanced, Cis, that three or four-and-twenty years ago, I was not quite so wise as I am now, and I took just the same fancy to the lady as my friend Hurstmonceaux : we were reading together with her father in the vacation. She went, like most other women, to the highest bidder ; but the duke always felt a strong regard for me, because I would very

gladly have saved his son from a *mésalliance* by taking the lady myself."

"But that was for your own sake, uncle?"

"Exclusively: only people don't gauge you by your merits, but by your convenience. If I had saved my country, the duke would never have given me a second thought; if I had baffled his son, he would have set no bounds to his gratitude."

"And why did the duke take you back with him last night?"

"Certainly that was a liberty; to judge by your face, Cis," said her uncle, laughing. "Well, you must know that, about eight months ago, the duke learned from his bankers that the money he allowed his son was no longer claimed; and, upon inquiry, they found that the marquis and his wife had died, within a few days of each other, of the same fever. Lord Hurstmonceaux had taken the name of Hurst (as you say his son did), and lived quite away from the English; sometimes at Naples, latterly

at Genoa. I had been in the habit of corresponding with him occasionally, and of executing little commissions for him in England. I suppose the duke knew this, for he sent for me to learn all he could about his son."

"Was he very much distressed, uncle?"

"Oh, very: people mostly are when a thing is past all remedy. He was likewise much harassed about his grandson, and he thought it likely I might know what had become of the son, and how he lived: for he has never claimed his father's allowance. At that time I knew no more about him than the duke did; but I have since heard that his mother succeeded to a small pittance on the death of her father: on which, I suppose, he exists."

"I like that, uncle," said Cecil, all in a glow: "I like his not touching a penny of the money, after the duke had behaved so ill to his parents."

"It may be very well: but, of course, the duke does not like the heir to his name to be

living under a hedge; and so he applied to me to undertake the part of mediator; thinking that, as I had been a friend of the father, I might have a chance of success. I'm heartily glad he's off; for I should have done nothing with him, and one does not like to fail."

"Lena could, uncle: he always did what she told him."

"That's very odd. Bless my soul! how delighted Fleming would be if——" he stopped short.

Cecil turned away her head, and laughed to herself. At her age, girls are often as quick-sighted as they ever will be. She knew perfectly all Mr Fleming's wishes and anticipations; she could see that her aunt's views were much more limited, as clearly as if she had been thirty.

The gentlemen were out when Lady John Dawbeney called. She brought her eldest daughter, and was very cordial in the expression of her thanks to Mrs Fleming for her assistance after the accident. Her manners were not *very*

condescending; and as her figure was tall, without being fine, her movements were somewhat *gauches*. Mrs Fleming was so quiet and unaffected, that Lady John, finding nothing to repress in her manners, became quite friendly, and would take no denial when she invited Lena to accompany her cousin for two days to Wrexworth. Lena, who was seated on a hassock, her arms round her concertina, which rested on her knees, turned her large eyes from Cecil to her mamma, but said not a word.

Mrs Fleming accepted for her.

Cecil, all this time, sat working a purse in crochet, and searching in her aunt's basket for different implements.

Miss Dawbeney stared at her slowly, beginning at the rich clusters formed by the thick plaits at the back of her head, and finishing with the slender high-bred foot, set off by her well-cut French brodequin. After that, she turned to Lena, who sat crouched on her hassock, and said, carelessly:—

“You are coming to-morrow?”

Lena bowed her little head.

"You will find it dull. However, bring that box with you, whatever you call it; perhaps it may amuse grandpapa."

"This?" said Lena, holding up her concertina.

"Yes: Edgar was always talking of you and your music."

"Who is Edgar?" asked Lena.

"My cousin Rothmond."

"I had rather not," said Lena.

"Why?"

"Because I don't know your grandpapa."

"How very odd!" said Emily.

Lady John was rising—

"I hope you left Lady Morland quite well," she said, as she passed Cecil. This was the first word she had spoken to her.

She replied only by a bow as dignified as she could make it.

"I say, mamma," cried Emily, detaining her mother, "she won't bring her box."

“My dear!” said Lady John, looking rather bewildered.

“This thing,” said Emily, tapping the concertina; “I know grandpapa would like it.”

“Oh!” said Lady John, comprehending, “I am sure my dear you will be so very kind: the duke will be pleased, and my boys are so fond of music.”

Lena looked frightened, but she bowed humbly.

Cecil flung herself on a sofa in a great rage. She had never seen such insolent people in her life. It was a comfort to think how ugly they were: certainly that did console her for a good deal. She only wished uncle Ned had been present; he knew how to put people in their right place. If it was not for Lena, she would not go to Wrexworth at all.

Lena went up and kissed her.

“Don’t take your accordion, Lena!” exclaimed Cecil; “don’t do anything to please them! Her sons, indeed!—her odious clowns of boys! She wants your money!”

"I have not got any, Cis," said Lena, simply. Mrs Fleming could not help laughing.

"My dear Cecil," she said, "think how young she is: we may let her money rest for some time to come."

Mr Fleming's mind was filled with an anxiety of a different kind. He was very much delighted—*comblé*: he felt extremely the honour of Lena being asked to Wrexworth; but it was surely very unlucky: there was no time to prepare anything fit for her to wear.

Mrs Fleming was agitated by no such doubts.

"They both look very nice, I think, Ernest," she said, glancing at the two girls in their fresh summer dresses. "I cannot see how changing their clothes will make them more fit to go to Wrexworth."

"Perfectly right, my dear madam," said Mr Morland.

"Oh!—if *you* think so, that is enough," returned Mr Fleming.

Cecil and Lena sat down to play chess. Mrs

Fleming brought her work near, and looked over them.

Mr Fleming and Mr Morland were pacing slowly up and down the verandah. Gray and dusk out of doors, the light of the lamp shone softly on the players, and the slight figure of Mrs Fleming, leaning over the arm of her deep chair.

“Do you think Lena improved?” asked Mr Fleming.

“Yes: not that she wanted improving,” returned Mr Morland.

“I am glad you think so. I certainly wish her to be good-looking,” remarked Mr Fleming.

“I always told you she would be a beauty,” said Mr Morland: “not indeed to the vulgar taste—but a Saint Catherine, or a Virgin of the Crescent.”

“I don’t hesitate to say that I hope she may form a connexion in a rank of life superior to her own,” said Mr Fleming: “with her fortune she may even aspire to a nobleman; but I should

wish, at the same time, that it was a marriage of attachment."

"My dear Mr Fleming," said Mr Morland, "when a girl has a hundred thousand pounds to her fortune, all those minor considerations are quite obliterated : I'll engage that the man who makes her a proposal shall care very little for the colour of her hair. Now, what should you say to me for a son-in-law ? "

Mr Fleming laughed.

"If any unforeseen event should summon my nephew to a better world, you are aware that I should succeed to the title : supposing always that Morland had the consideration to die before me. What do you think of my chances ? "

"I am sure that if you were in earnest, you would do me a great honour, and one that I should weigh well before I rejected," said Mr Fleming, smiling ; "notwithstanding the difference in your age."

"Age again has so little to do with it," said Mr Morland. "Of course I should require the

greater part of her fortune to be placed at my disposal, in return for the honour I conferred. I should then set up a stud, and devote myself to the turf; I should build a yacht, and cruise two years out of three; I should have a moor in Scotland, and cross to Norway for salmon-fishing; and I should hardly know her by sight if I met her in the street. No, my dear Mr Fleming: a man of rank, who marries for money, condemns his wife to a life of insult and disappointment. Do not try to make your daughter happier than her mother; for, depend upon it, you will never succeed!"

Mr Fleming took the compliment, laughed, and said that Lena should decide the point: he would never force her inclination.

"If you want to marry her *well*, take my advice, and say nothing about her fortune," added Mr Morland: "no man of sense marries a girl with a fortune."

"Why not?"

"Because she spends twice as much as she

brings, and looks down upon him into the bargain."

"Yet women of fortune are almost the only ones who do marry in these days," rejoined Mr Fleming.

"But I hope you don't suppose men of sense to be common," retorted Mr Morland, stepping in at the window.

"Let us see which will win," said Mr Fleming, sitting down to the chess-table.

Mrs Dixon was in a great ferment that night: every chair and couch up stairs was covered with frocks and mantles, and other articles of finery; she pulled and pushed Lena, and rattled the ivory handles of the brushes more vehemently than usual.

"Are you going too, Dixon?" asked Lena, with a sigh.

"I should think so, Miss Lena. I don't suppose you could do for yourself, either."

"Cecil would fasten me," said Lena.

"Cecil would not, then! begging your par-

don, Miss Fleming," cried Dixon. "You are not going to Wrexworth to disgrace yourself, Miss Lena!"

Cecil stood laughing in the doorway, with all her golden hair falling over her.

"And there's a tooth broken out of your beautiful comb, you naughty child! and whatever have you done with all your handkerchiefs? there's not one in the satchet!" said Dixon, tumbling over the drawers.

Lena's head grew bewildered at the slightest bustle: she sat looking deplorable.

"Oh! I know," exclaimed Cecil: "I turned them out to look for something; I forget what now. Let me come; I'll put things to rights."

"Look at your cousin, Miss Lena," said Dixon, reproachfully: "That's a young lady who has got a head on her shoulders, and knows what she is about; and what's more, lets me brush her hair as hard as I like."

And Dixon, suiting the action to the word,

seized Lena's long tresses in one hand, and commenced assaulting her with a large brush, without appearing to heed her feeble expostulations.

CHAPTER XIV.

Wir haben lang genng geliebt
Und wollen endlich hassen.

G. HERWEGH.

In which were okis grete, streight as a line,
Undir the which the grass, so freshe of hew,
Was newly sprong
Every tre well fro his fellou grew,
With braunchis brode ladin with levis new,
That sprongin out agen the sounne shene
Some very rede, and some a glad light grene.

CHAUCER.

MR FLEMING gave Cecil the most elegant little enamelled watch and chain that could be procured, as a parting present. She took leave of her uncle and aunt with great regret, trying to stifle her tears because Mr Morland was looking at her, and she was afraid he would remind her

with what unwillingness she had made the acquaintance of the people she was now leaving with so much emotion.

She employed herself as soon as she had recovered her composure, in directing Lena how to behave at Wrexworth: how to repel the airs of the Dawbeney girls, and to look coolly on the advances of the Dawbeney boys.

Her uncle Ned listened behind his newspaper with much pleasure.

"Thank you, Cis," he said, looking up at last: "I'm so much edified, you can't think what a useful lesson you have afforded me. I shall know exactly what to do the next time a lady makes an attack upon Scarbrook."

Lena, who had looked extremely puzzled while Cecil had been talking, now took a little box of filigree silver from her pocket, and emptied the contents into her little hand.

There was a doubloon, a half-sovereign, an old louis d'or, and two little stumpy Turkish coins.

“That is all my money ;” she said, laughing. “When I want any thing, mamma buys it for me.”

“This is Wrexworth, madonna,” said Mr Morland at last ; “take a good look at it : one day it will belong to your friend Hurstmonceaux.”

Lena stood up in the carriage by Mr Morland, and looked all round.

They had just entered the park, and were going gently down hill towards the house, a large Gothic building, with steep hills behind it, clothed with wood.

There was a sound of water, as if a cascade was near them, hidden among the trees ; and farther on, a diamond glitter among the boughs marked the spot where a lake of some extent lay, surrounded by thickets of hawthorn and willows. Wide lawns and clumps of giant oaks stretched in front of the principal entrance ; the cedars for which Wrexworth was famed, grew in the flower garden on the south side of the house. Part of the carriage road was cut through a wood, planted with American shrubs

and rare specimens of fern. The trees meeting overhead, and the turf beneath, and flowering shrubs appearing unexpectedly where a space was cleared at the foot of some venerable tree, made this drive very attractive to the young people. Cecil wanted to get out and walk. Lena thought she should like to gather fern ; but Mr Morland was anxious to reach Wrexworth, and he reminded them that they would have plenty of time to explore the beauties of the grounds, in company with the Misses Dawbeney.

“Pleasant !” said Cecil, shrugging her shoulders.

Lena had already taken fast hold of Cecil’s hand, as a precautionary measure, and clung to her as they passed the powdered footmen at the entrance ; whom she contemplated as if they had been two giants at the wicket of an enchanted castle. She felt a sensation of awe at the dim, cold hall, with its painted glass windows ; a Greek statue, just in front of her, with the head bent, and the masterly drapery folded over the

breast ; some dingy armour on the walls ; and a broad, solemn staircase in black oak, seen almost in twilight beyond a carved screen that ran across the back of the hall.

Lady John and her daughters were seated at work in a pretty morning room, with oriel windows of coloured glass. Emily was trying to scratch the panes with her crochet, and Adela was dragging a little spaniel over the sofa cushions.

"The duke is so anxious to see you, Mr Morland," said Lady John, when she had welcomed the cousins.

"Oh ! grandpapa has been in such a state all the morning !" said Emily ; "he was so cross with Adela and me. Now, mamma, we can go out in the park ?"

"Don't go too far, Emily ; you must not tire your young friends," said Lady John. "You are very delicate, my love, are you not ?"

"No, madam," said Lena, looking surprised.

"I think, Emily, you had better order the

pony phaeton. You don't look very strong, my dear : you are not used to walk far, I dare say."

"Oh, very well, I don't. care," said Emily, pulling the bell. "Summers, the pony carriage. And what are *you* going to do?" she asked, looking carelessly to Cecil.

"That I do not yet know," said Cecil, who had quietly seated herself, not a little surprised at the attention Lady John paid to Lena, and the total neglect she showed to herself.

"If you will come with me," said Adela, "I will show you my silver pheasants."

"Thank you," said Cecil ; and they went out together.

"Here come my white mice, as Charles calls them," said Emily : "they are so quiet, you need not be afraid. Now, which way shall we go?"

Lena found Emily much more agreeable than she had expected. From an insolent coldness, her manner changed at once to a perfect intimacy. This is quite a trait of the present gen-

eration : formerly people became acquainted by degrees.

“Grandpapa does not show this morning : he is ‘the invisible gentleman,’ as Charles calls him. ‘He is in such a way about my cousin—did you know that was Hurstmonceaux?—that young man who was with you : he’s the strangest creature. I’ll tell you about his father and mother.”

And Emily related to Lena the substance of what Mr Morland had told Cecil the day before ; interspersing her history with a good many sayings of her brother Charles, who appeared to be considered as the wit of the family.

“What pretty dresses you always wear,” said Emily, diverging a little from her subject : “is that an India muslin ? I suppose it cost millions : but then your father is so rich !”

“Is he ?” said Lena.

“So they say. Edgar is always talking of you. I don’t think he admires Cecil much : do you think her pretty ?”

“Cecil? beautiful!” exclaimed Lena.

“Hum!” we shall see what Charles says,” replied Emily: “but I had rather be rich than ever so handsome.”

“You live near Thornley, don’t you?” said Lena.

“Yes; but though the Morlands are good sort of people, they are not exactly visitable—one meets nobody there. Mr Morland is different: he is very much considered—he goes everywhere. If you play your cards well, you will occupy a very different position in society from the Morland girls.”

“Dear, I think them so very grand!” said Lena, simply; at which Emily laughed all the way home.

As they went through the long dark gallery up stairs, Emily stopped at a door.

“Let us go in and see grandpapa!” she said.

“I’m afraid,” said Lena, drawing back.

“Afraid!” echoed her companion, with a loud laugh; “why—because he is a duke? I say,

grandpapa," she exclaimed, bursting into the room and pulling Lena after her, "here's Lena Fleming says she is afraid of you!"

"No, my dear, you are not afraid of me, are you?" said the duke, holding out his hand.

Lena walked gently up to him, and putting her little hand into his, said: "No, sir; but I was afraid of coming into your room without leave."

Her truthful gray eyes seemed to please the duke, who looked at her kindly, still holding her hand. He was sitting with his feet upon a broad faldstool, and a large rug or coverlet of tiger-skins thrown over his knees. He made room for her to sit down on the faldstool, and she soon felt at her ease; looking quietly up with unbounded admiration at his fine head, and gently touching the tiger-skin with the tips of her fingers.

"You are a very good little girl," said the duke, "and I am glad to see you. Emily, what are you doing at my cabinet? You will hamper the lock."

“No, I shan’t, grandpapa,” said Emily, rattling the key in the lock of a japan cabinet; “I know you have some Portugal plums in here, and I want to get at them.”

“No, my dear, there are none left. Don’t, Emily; I can’t bear to see you trying my keys—there are no plums. This good little girl looks quite ashamed of you!” said the duke, patting Lena on the head.

Lena coloured deeply. Emily went on rattling the lock, just as if her grandpapa had not spoken. He seemed to give her up as a bad job, for he turned to Lena.

“And they tell me you play on a very curious instrument, my dear,—will you let me hear it?”

“Yes, sir,” she whispered.

“Emily shall see for it,” he began.

But Emily had burst open the cabinet, and found the box of plums. “I thought so!” she exclaimed, running forward with it in her arms; “now I’ll have a feast! Will you have some, Lena?—have some, grandpapa? Oh, never

mind her accordion—we 'll have that after tea—it will help to pass the evening."

She seemed to have her own way with the duke, for he offered no opposition to her plans; and she sat in the window-seat, eating, with the box on her knees.

"This is a curious rug, is it not, my dear?" said the duke, observing Lena stroking the tiger-skin.

"Yes, sir," she said, "and very comfortable if you are cold."

"Yes, I 'm very old," said the duke.

Emily burst into a noisy laugh.

"I said cold, sir," said Lena, softly.

"I wish, Emily, you would cure yourself of that horrid laugh!" exclaimed the duke, irritably. "I shall speak to Lady John about you: and there you are, cracking the stones with your teeth, you naughty girl!"

Emily made a gesture of extreme derision behind her grandpapa; and Lena felt quite wretched at being in the company of a wicked

girl, who mocked at an old man with such white hair. But Emily, who had now eaten as many plums as she could, became restless, and seizing Lena by the arm, dragged her off to dress for dinner.

“We all dine down stairs now, because grand-papa is alone,” said she: “I can tell you, you are in high favour with the old gentleman. There’s your room, and Cecil dressing already.”

The cousins found the duke installed in the drawing-room beneath his tiger-skin. He greeted Cecil very kindly, and told her she was very like her mother, whom he remembered the beauty of her season.

Cecil smiled, blushed, and sat down by her uncle. Lady John, looking up from her embroidery, asked her how she liked the aviary; she replied that she had been very much pleased with it, and their conversation closed.

Mr Dawbeney made his appearance just before dinner, sauntering vacantly into the room. Lady John presented him in a marked way

to Lena ; but he did not appear anxious to follow up the introduction.

With the consequence of a boy of seventeen, very weak and ignorant, and remarkably proud, he liked to choose to whom he should talk, and therefore addressed himself only to Mr Morland ; who answered him tersely, and smiled to see how stubbornly he opposed his mother's plotting.

Cecil declared afterwards to her uncle Ned it was the dullest evening she had ever passed. She was not then old enough to relish the position of a bystander, which in after-years she found so advantageous for studying the game of life. Besides, she was just of the age when girls are peculiarly sensitive to neglect, and are not very likely to meet with any other treatment.

Lady John really forgot she was in the room, and talked with Mr Morland of their mutual acquaintances. Her two daughters reclined in their chairs, working indolently. Mr Dawbeney was apparently fast asleep. Lena

was sitting at the duke's feet, playing to him on her concertina. Now, the duke had been very anxious to see Lena, because he had heard, through Mr Morland, that she had been much associated with Lord Hurstmonceaux. He had taken just that sort of liking to his grandson that very wayward perverse people sometimes take to those who are quite as wilful and passionate as themselves. But almost the only injunction Mr Fleming gave to his little girl, was a solemn warning never to let any allusion to the sailor pass her lips : so that when the duke put her some leading question, in the hopes of making her speak of him, she was sure to stop in the middle of a sentence, colour crimson, and look helplessly towards Cecil for assistance.

"Charles, why did you not bring Edgar home to dinner?" asked Lady John, "it would have been just in his way as he rode out with you."

"Oh ! I wish you had," said Adela.

"Because he was a good boy, and went home to take care of his papa," said Mr Dawbeney,

waking up a little, and then falling fast asleep again.

"He's a most amiable creature," said Lady John.

"The most stupid fellow I know," said Mr Dawbeney, yawning.

"I'm sure he's very handsome," exclaimed Emily, who seemed to prize that qualification above all others.

Mr Dawbeney murmured some slang phrases, importing that he despised Mr Rothmond's cast of character ; and then slumbered again.

"If that means anything bad, it's not true," said Lena, looking indignantly up at the duke : "I'm sure he's very kind, and very brave, and picked me up out of the water ; and Mr Hurst carried me home."

Then recollecting she had uttered the very name she had been keeping back with so much care, she coloured a beautiful carmine over neck and brow, and dropped her head down on her accordion.

"You are a very good little girl to stand up

for your friends," said the duke, stroking her soft hair, "and you shall tell me all about it."

Lena looked up hesitating; but Lady John skilfully interposed.

"I think, my dear duke, this little darling must be quite tired. I dare say she keeps early hours. She shall go to bed now, and her little story will do nicely to-morrow."

Lena rose and bade the company good night, and Cecil gladly accompanied her, for her stock of patience was almost exhausted.

She had sat thinking of the old times when Lady John lived next door to her mother, and they were together most hours of the day: she saw Lady John coming across the lawn in her straw bonnet and white gown, with her large silk work-bag, and her graceful mother leaning out among the geraniums to welcome her, in her fluttering summer dress of pale lilac; she was in Richmond Park again, sitting among the fern with those two cold indolent girls, then little eager things in their brown holland coats,

gathering nosegays, and squabbling over their doll's tea-cups, or hiding Laura from the nurses among the trees. And all this was quite past and gone, as if it had never been; and of the whole party she was the only one in whose memory a trace of it remained.

She thought of one of her uncle Ned's axioms—"Take people as you find them." "It's rather early to begin," she thought; "and for my part, I'd rather leave than take people when they grow so odious. I'm thankful we go away to-morrow; and I'm not best pleased with uncle Ned, talking and laughing with that hateful woman, just as if nothing was the matter."

And when they were on their road to Thornley, she opened her mind to her uncle, to his great amusement, and informed him how she had been overlooked, and how shameful it was in Lady John, and how impertinent in her daughters. Her uncle went on reading a pamphlet, and smiling to himself all the time.

"Why, now, Cis," he said, looking up sud-

denly, as soon as she paused for breath, "just ask yourself what these people could *get out of you?*"

"Dear me, uncle!" she said, "when you know what friends Lady John used to pretend to be with poor mamma, and we were all children together, as if—"

"Well, and what can they make of that?—what pleasure can you give the girls?—what good can you do the mother?"

Cecil looked perplexed.

"The fact is, Cis, these people have no feelings—very few people have: they don't want society, as you would understand it: they want solid benefits. Lena is the daughter of a man of increasing wealth; she may put money into Lady John's pocket, you may *not*. You should not be angry with the good woman for following her nature; it's earthy: she wants gold and silver: let her grub for it, in Heaven's name, and don't rail at her because she does not seek for tenderness, and old friendship, and

what not, for which she cares no more than she does for the stars."

"I will care for the stars, uncle, always," said Cecil: "I don't mean to grub in the earth, because others do."

"That's right, Cis; now, you talk and I read, and so we shall get nicely through our journey."

CHAPTER XV.

K. JOHN. ——— We must speed
For France, for France; for it is more than need.

SHAKESPEARE.

HER uncle Morland was in the portico, smoking a cigar. He came directly to the carriage-door and handed her out, with many expressions of pleasure.

“ Oh ! uncle Morland, I am so happy to see you again ! ” she exclaimed, hanging on his arm.
“ How are they all at home ? ”

“ All well—my lady is within. You know she is going abroad, I suppose ? ”

“ Going abroad, uncle ! ”

“ Yes—why surely Ned is in the secret. Oh ! he is gone in : never mind ; come with me and see the colt I am breaking in for you.”

"And are you going too, uncle?"

"No; I'm the exception: I have no taste for foreign scenery."

"And what am I to do?—and what's the use of the colt, if I am going away?" said Cecil, half inclined to cry. "I shall die of ennui without you and Basil."

"I'm heartily sorry for it, Cis; but my lady wants the girls to have all the talents, as the French say. I thought, for my part, they could play fast enough, and loud enough; but my lady knows best: I never interfere."

"And Basil, uncle?"

"Oh!—what, you wish to know about Basil? He holds to his old crochet of going to Germany: wants to study astrology. In my time we studied nothing."

"I wish *we* could say as much, uncle," said Cecil. "I have had such a holiday—so much time to think and to observe—that I don't like the idea of going back to words again."

"And Thornley is to be let," said Lord Mor-

land, opening the gate of the paddock where the colt was feeding.

"I'm sure I shall think it a great liberty of anybody coming to live here after us," said Cecil.

"It is a liberty I can very well overlook—for a consideration," said Lord Morland, laughing. "But here comes my lady, and Ned with her: I suppose they have finished their consultation."

Lady Morland welcomed Cecil with as much warmth as she ever showed; which, at the best of times, was not much.

"I think Cis had better stay at home with me," said Lord Morland: "she does not seem to like the thoughts of her trip."

"We none of us prefer it, my dear lord," replied Lady Morland; "but we must move in the path ordained for us, whether it is to Paris or California. I'm sure I wish to be taught to make use of these journeys. Life, you know, is a pilgrimage."

Lord Morland, who had disposed of his cigar on the appearance of his lady, looked very solemn, and said,

“So it was with a great many of us : with himself, for instance ; for he was seldom long in one place. At the same time,” he remarked, “he thought the air of California very likely to suit his complaint; for hitherto, like Falstaff, he had found no remedy ‘for this consumption of the purse.’”

“I hope we shall all improve the occasion,” added Lady Morland. “Louisa will be enabled to learn the art of pastel painting, which you know is carried to great perfection in Paris. You, my dear Cecil, will extend your knowledge of languages; Hen will, I trust, gain—gain strength.”

“I’ll engage she won’t gain anything else,” said uncle Ned, aside.

“And Laura’s dancing will soon leave nothing to be desired. And then, my dear Edward, we shall have one privilege that I hope we shall all prize—the Protestant church on Sunday. I would live nowhere without that inestimable advantage. The Word every Sabbath-day: think what that is! But, do you know, one thing has always surprised me: the price of a really good

silk dress is quite as high in Paris as in London; and the same with ribbons. Now, how do you account for that?"

Cecil, completely bewildered, looked to her uncle Morland. He had hidden his face in his handkerchief. Uncle Ned, quite composed, gave Lady Morland the first absurd reason that came in his head, and then turned off to look at the colt.

The girls welcomed Cecil with acclamation; she was the life of the party, and the schoolroom had been very dull without her.

Laura clung round her neck, and nestled her beautiful little head in her dress.

"Oh, Cecil! what have you here?" she exclaimed, drawing forth the watch and chain, Mr Fleming's parting present. "What beautiful links of purple and gold, and the watch of the same colour! Oh, how I wish I had it! How lovely!"

"Listen," said Cecil.

The little watch was a repeater, and she made it strike.

“Oh, Cis! if I had it to belong to me!” said Laura, with a trembling eagerness, “only for one day!”

“There, you have seen it now,” cried Louisa. “I want Cecil to tell us all about her visit to Wrexworth.”

This was almost an inexhaustible subject, so much was to be said about and against the Dawbeney girls; and, when that was exhausted, all Cecil’s clothes were passed in review and admired, Laura holding the watch in her hand all the time.

At last, when it was time for the girls to go down into the drawing-room, Cecil claimed her watch.

“Oh! let me keep it, Cecil! I never longed for any thing before. If I don’t have it, I shall be so miserable!” said Laura, with her eyes full of tears.

The piteous eagerness in her face quite melted Cecil.

“Well, take it,” she said, hastily slipping the

chain from her neck ; “ you want it more than I do.”

“ Oh, dear Cis ! lovely, kind Cis !” cried Laura, in a transport.

The other girls reproached her for her greediness, but she could not hear them : her whole being was absorbed in her new possession.

Her uncle Ned heard of the transfer that evening from the envious Hen.

“ Yes ; that is how it will always be with those two,” he remarked. “ Give and take : the one always giving—the other always taking. We never alter, my dear Hen : the boy is father to the man, as the English Solomon said.”

“ I don’t want to alter, uncle,” said Hen, sulkily.

“ I know it, my dear : I thought to comfort you by the reflection. Well, I hope it may never be anything worse than a watch.”

The bustle and discomfort attendant upon letting a house was now felt in perfection by every inmate at Thornley.

Lord Morland took himself off to Doncaster immediately.

“I shall be only in your way,” he said to Lady Morland: “I had better take my leave of you a few days earlier, and clear off. I’m sure you must rejoice to get rid of all your superfluous rubbish.”

Lady Morland was never fretted by any little display of her lord’s selfishness. She felt that it could not be comfortable for him to be in the midst of inventories and packing-cases: to hear nothing but discussions about what furniture was to be locked up, and what left out; what hangings were to be put up, and what taken down; what books were to be numbered, and what wines were to be secured in the cellars. With his indolence, it was anguish to him to see so many people busy; and she did not feel, as some would have done with a pang, that as all this turmoil was the result of his extravagance, it was hardly honourable of him to steal off and not face the annoyance. It was this total carelessness about his faults of character which made

him go on so smoothly with her. Forbearance only irritates ; but utter indifference, where you know yourself in the wrong, has a soothing effect on the feelings. And though, to a woman of her disposition, pecuniary losses are the most severe of all, yet she felt them through Lord Morland—as her father would have felt them through a correspondent at Birmingham—without any wounded emotion of the heart, but straight through to the pocket.

Lou and Hen did not know they were going to France till Cecil told them : Lady Morland never imparted any news to them ; at which Cecil often wondered. Even at her age she was surprised that their mother never drew the girls towards her by any little acts of confidence ; which, at a time when they cannot be claimed as a right, are always felt to be so graceful and conciliating by young people.

They were very much delighted at the idea. Thornley had never been made a cheerful home to them, and any change was welcome.

"I suppose mamma can hardly dress us such awful figures at Paris," said Lou. "It is not giving me a fair chance. Even you, Cis, in that pretty bonnet and dress, I declare you are quite good-looking."

As Louisa seriously thought herself far handsomer than her cousin, Cecil laughed, and took the compliment as it was meant.

"If Miss Penley were not going too," said Hen, with a sigh, "perhaps I might enjoy myself; but she seems to be packing like the rest."

"I wonder," said Lou, "whether mamma will announce to us where we are going, or whether she will take it for granted that we know."

"If I were you I would ask her, when we are half-way between Dover and Calais," said Hen.

Lou asked the question a little earlier. One evening Lady Morland said to the girls, "We breakfast at half-past seven to-morrow, my dears, that we may reach London in time for the Dover train."

"Where do we go then, mamma?" asked Louisa.

"We are going to reside at Paris for some time," replied Lady Morland.

"Oh!" said Lou, taking her candle.

The servants up stairs were cording their trunks.

"Almost time to know where we are going," said Lou, pointing to the luggage. "Mamma is very close; perhaps she does not know that two can play at that game. It is for her to be secret now; one day it may be my turn."

Cecil felt this was wrong, but she did not know how to set it right. She could not understand why Lady Morland should be mysterious to her children upon a point they must be informed of sooner or later; and she was not surprised at Louisa's resentment.

Meanwhile the stupid Hen was trying to pack a white kitten in one of the trunks, by squeezing it down in a corner and covering it with linen. Laura was winding her watch, and set-

ting it at half-past seven, with a vague idea that she would then know at what o'clock she ought to get up to-morrow.

"What's that noise?" asked Lou.

"It's the kitten," said Laura.

"What is she doing with it?" said Lou.

"Packing it up," replied Hen.

"Why, you stupid girl, it will die in that trunk!" exclaimed Lou.

"No it won't," said Hen.

"Cis, to the rescue! she is killing Mimi," cried Louisa.

Hen sat down on the trunk; the other girls tried to pull her off. Miss Penley, hearing a noise, entered the room in her curl-papers, and reproved the combatants. She also set the kitten at liberty, together with a piece of bread and butter intended for poor Mimi's refreshment during the voyage. Hen went to bed crying for her kitten; and Laura, who had just broken the mainspring of her watch, and knew by the buzzing that something was wrong, hurried

after her, afraid lest somebody should ask her what o'clock it was, and find out the mischief she had done.

Uncle Ned had the pleasure of conducting Lady Morland to Paris, and settling her in a suite of apartments in the Rue de Rivoli.

It was a delightful situation. The iron railings of the Tuileries gardens were just opposite their front windows, and Miss Penley used to walk beneath those beautiful trees with her pupils, whenever they were allowed that recreation.

Once a quarter uncle Ned came over to see his nieces, and assist Lady Morland in her pecuniary arrangements.

But Lord Morland found it possible to exist for more than two years, without making any effort to pay his family a visit. He said that he suffered horribly in crossing the water; and if it were the truth, those who have been afflicted in like manner will hold him to be fully acquitted of the obligation.

He did feel a little twinge of conscience whenever his brother returned, bringing all kinds of messages and entreaties from Cecil, and embroideries from the whole party, enough to set up a stall at the Oxford bazaar, together with stiff little complimentary notes from his daughters.

At last Cecil gave him up in despair; and as for the others, they had never entertained any views at all upon the subject, and therefore were not liable to be disappointed.

But one day when Cecil had, (as she sometimes threatened to do,) forgotten all about her uncle, and was sitting in her own room deep in the perusal of the exquisite little story, by Jules Sandeau, called "Madeleine," the lady's-maid came in, with her round cap perched on her smooth black bands and her hands plunged in her apron pockets, and approaching Cecil with an air of great mystery, hinted that "*Il y avait dans le salon un beau Monsieur qui desirait parler avec Mademoiselle Cécile.*"

"What name, Zéphyrine?" asked Cecil, not

very well pleased that her reading should be interrupted.

“Le Monsieur n'avait pas donné de nom.”

“Oh, no doubt it's the new music-master,” said Cecil, rising indolently.

“Ce n'était point assurément un maître de musique,” Zéphyrine insisted; and she considered herself a great authority in assigning to people at a glance their proper stations in society.

“Was he an Englishman?”

“Ni Français, ni Anglais: certainement qu'il ne fut pas Anglais! Apparemment c'était quelque grand Seigneur Russe.”

And Cecil, entering with her most stately air to express her regrets that Lady Morland was from home, found herself greeted by a hearty laugh from her uncle Morland.

“These are my credentials,” he remarked, laying a letter, in the well-known handwriting of her uncle Ned, upon the velvet of the chimneypiece.

“I don't know what he finds to say to my

lady, but I believe his letters are all financial : be rich if you can, Cis, that's all—you don't know what a bore it is to be poor."

"I hope you are not poor, uncle?" returned Cecil, laughing.

"Not just at this moment, Cis : and so, that we may enjoy the present without delay, let's be off, before my lady comes back."

Cecil looked round half frightened.

"Why, uncle, my aunt is only just gone to the Rue Castiglione, to the dentist, with the others ; she will be back in a few minutes."

"The more reason, child, why we should make haste off. I shall be delighted to see my lady again ; but suppose she should 'stop your liberty,' as the sailors call it—you see I have become quite nautical.—Ah ! what I have suffered in coming to see you is best known to myself."

"Not much, I am sure, uncle : you are looking too well," retorted Cecil, as she ran off to dress.

They hurried down the stairs, and through the wicket of the *porte cochère*.

“Now I shall see Paris at last!” exclaimed Cecil, looking joyously round. “You don’t know, uncle, what prisoners we are! Except going now and then to the Bois, I know no more of Paris than if I had never left Thornley!”

“Well, Cis, we will try and make up for lost time. First—let’s see—I want some gloves.”

“I *can* direct you there, uncle: our glover lives close at hand.”

And Cecil conducted her uncle to a small shop in the same street, where they always dealt.

A thoughtful-looking priest, who was trying a pair of gloves on his slender coffee-coloured hands, bowed and made way for the lady at the counter. This is the custom in France; and when you come back, our English ways, (though of course the best,) jar a little on your feelings.

While Lord Morland was choosing a profu-

sion of gloves for himself and his niece, he went on talking to the glover about the theatres and other public places ; and hearing that Rachel played that night at the Français, his plan for the evening was decided.

“ See Rachel ! Oh, uncle, what happiness ! ” exclaimed Cecil, as they left the shop : “ and how beautifully you speak French—it is a pleasure to hear you *grasseyer*—just like a Parisian ! One can walk along the streets without the people grumbling *Anglais !* as we pass ; which from them is almost as complimentary an epithet as if they said *Forçat !* ”

“ Oh, by the way, Cis, how does my lady come on with her French ? ” asked Lord Morland.

“ She does not speak it at all, uncle, ” Cecil replied.

“ Oh ! ” he said quietly ; for he never allowed himself a joke at her expense, though he was naturally curious to know whether her attainments were at all extended in that department of learning.

"Have you dined, Cis?" he asked.

"Oh, no, uncle, never mind dinner," she replied, urging him forward impatiently.

"Not mind dinner!" said Lord Morland, laughing; "and in Paris, where one really *can* dine! Besides, I have not dined myself: we will go to the Trois Frères."

"Where is that, uncle?"

"Poor child, you are really ignorant of Paris. The Trois Frères Provençaux is situated at a corner of the Palais Royal; and unless things are much altered since I was here last, there you can dine in a very satisfactory manner."

"Provided always we are not too late for the play," added Cecil.

"We will not be too late—we have an hour and a half before us," he replied; "and we will stop at a bookseller's, and buy a copy of 'Virginie,' her character to-night."

Cecil read the tragedy while they were waiting for dinner.

"How do you like it?" he asked.

“It is a dull play, uncle : but, never mind ; we shall see Rachel !”

She never thought it a dull play afterwards : the words were not the same when they had once been steeped in the pathetic music of Rachel’s wondrous voice.

Certainly the Théâtre Français does not derive its attraction from externals.

Cecil was astonished at the excessively dirty box ; which, by paying treble the amount, Lord Morland had induced the garçon to procure for him even at that late hour.

The house was dingy and tarnished, and the audience did not look particularly clean. There was no music. The curtain rose at a given signal, and discovered a Roman interior, very vilely painted. There was a moment’s pause,—and then Rachel, in her trailing white pallium and tunic, glided on the stage.

She carried in her hands the violet wreath and the chalice filled with corn, which she was about to offer at her father’s hearth, on the eve

of her departure ; and the quiet sadness of her voice, as she commended Virginus to the care of his household gods, when she should be no longer there to watch over him, shook Cecil's nerves as the wind thrills the strings of a harp. It was all over with her composure from the first moment : her tears kept time throughout to those unrivalled tones.

The extreme slenderness of Rachel's figure gives a peculiar charm to these Roman costumes : the soft long folds melt and break, and sweep into a fresh arrangement of drapery at every step.

"What would I give to be so beautiful!" cried Cecil, turning to her uncle as the drop-scene fell.

"Why, Cis, are you fishing for a compliment?" he asked ; for his niece was the prettiest woman (which is not saying much) in the house, and a whole battery of lorgnettes had been directed to their box.

"I'm in earnest, uncle—I could not have

believed in such beauty—her soul shines through her at every word !”

“That it easily may—it has very little to shine through,” was his reply. “She is too thin, Cis ; but she’s a wonderful actress—there’s nothing like her : Mrs Siddons was not *like* her.”

In the French version of the play, Virginius and his daughter have it all to themselves ; and he acted his part, which was considerable, with great force and delicacy.

Perhaps the most striking passage in the play is that where Virginie orders Appius Claudius to leave the house. The cold surprise with which she turns from Fausta to Appius, and fixes him with her glittering eye before she lets fall the words—

Quel audace !

is perfect ; as well as the exquisite skill with which her voice ascends, almost in a diatonic scale, while scorn and passion struggle for the mastery, to the lines

Et vous venez ici, m'offrir presque à genoux
Des présens teints de sang !

till, choked with wrath and tears, she drops her arms and falters out—

—— du sang de mon epoux !

And then the fine contrast in repeating the words—

Sortez ! sortez !

the first uttered in a tone, almost with a grimace, of loathing, accompanied by a gesture as if she threw from her some noxious reptile ; the second, as she points her extended arm to the doorway, given in a clear full tone of command, that echoed through the house.

Cecil rose from her seat as if she had been magnetised—her excitement was painful—her breath grew short and difficult ; and Lord Morland distracted her by saying calmly, from time to time, “ Very well—*very* well,” as if to himself, and as if that was the utmost he had to say about it.

But there was something better yet to come : at the close of the fourth act ; where Virginie prepares to accompany her father to the Forum, and her strength fails her suddenly—her overtasked nerves give way,—her limbs droop,—her voice charged with tears is but just audible, and her lingering gaze bids adieu to every object in the beloved home, to which she feels that she is never to return.

People who have never suffered can scarcely comprehend the truth of scenes like these : it is only those whom sorrow has wrung to the quick, who are able to detect the naturalness of the delineation.

Indeed, she followed all the last act through a mist of tears ; and when the unhappy daughter veiled herself to receive the fatal stroke, the painful throbbing of her heart warned Cecil that she had been quite enough excited for one evening.

“It is fortunate you are not going to a ball to-night, Cis,” remarked her uncle, as he handed

her into the *fiacre* that was to convey them home.

"I'm quite ashamed of myself, uncle," she replied, drying her eyes. "I know what an object I must look ; but I could not help it. What a voice!—there's nothing for it but just to go on crying."

"I say, Cis, will my lady be very much disturbed?—about the play, I mean : she's so religious, you know."

"It's too late now, uncle, thank goodness, to think about that! I've seen what I shall remember all my life : and now, if people *are* angry—why—"

"You don't care a straw, you mean to say," returned her uncle, laughing ; "but I should think Lady Morland could not object, just for once, eh? And then, there was no afterpiece."

"Ah! uncle," cried Cecil, highly amused, "suppose you get into disgrace! Are you frightened? We are coming very near. We are in the Rue St Honoré ; now we are in the Rue du Dauphin ; now we turn—we are in the Rue

de Rivoli! Has your courage all oozed away by this time? And now we stop at our own door. 'Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.' "

"I think the girl's head is turned," he said, laughing; "there, run up first, while I settle with the coachman."

But Cecil stood laughing on the staircase till her uncle joined her; though she was in that excited state of spirits, that, I am sorry to say, she would not have cared much if her aunt *had* been in a rage.

But the little note which Lord Morland had left behind him on the chimneypiece had done much to reconcile her ladyship to her niece's absence.

It consisted of these few words :

"Morland will bring you this: he has been winning lately, by way of variety. To keep him out of the salon, you had better let Cecil go about with him every where: he cannot take her into a gaming-house. Your's ever, E. M."

So that Lady Morland was disposed on the whole to receive the truants with amenity. Cecil had done, unconsciously, just what could be wished ; and somehow Lady Morland never exacted from her the blind submission that she did from the other girls. She ordered tea to be in readiness, and waited benignantly for her husband's return.

Lou was embroidering a handkerchief ; Hen, who had been tormented by the dentist, was crying, because she could not eat ; Laura was playing with the dog, when Lord Morland came in hastily with Cecil on his arm, and expressed his extreme delight at seeing Lady Morland again, and his contrition at having run away with one of her charges ; but really, hearing that Rachel played at the Français, the temptation was too strong.

“ Oh, my dear lord, don't make any apology ; our dear Edward's letter, which you were considerate enough to leave behind, told me who was the thief : or else, on my word (with her

little stage laugh), ha ! ha ! Zéphyrine gave Miss Penley a formidable history of what had happened during our short absence ! Do you find the girls grown ?”

“ I find Cecil prodigiously grown and improved : upon my word I don’t know when I ’ve seen—”

“ Yes, exactly,” interposed Lady Morland. “ We don’t care, you know, whether we are tall or short—the object is, you know, to improve day by day. You will have some tea, won’t you ? Did you find it warm in the theatre ? The trees have been coming out wonderfully this day or two.”

Lord Morland finding that *looks* were a prohibited subject, gratefully accepted the tea ; and, thinking to mend his remark, said, “ that certainly just at this moment Cis did n’t look very bright—it was not the time for her to make a conquest, for instance : he should say that she had been quite *hors de combat* during the last three acts, and had no longer endangered the

peace of those very persevering young men with lorgnettes (*you* know, Cis) in the opposite box."

Cecil shook her head at her uncle in vain—Lady Morland turned and surveyed her.

"Why, Cecil!" she almost screamed, "what is the matter with your eyes?"

"Ay, you may well ask!" returned Lord Morland, laughing; "but it was such a touching story: I don't know how I escaped the infection, for the Frenchmen were blubbering all round me; were they not, Cis?"

"I see nothing praiseworthy in that," said Lady Morland; "and I hope that Cecil, if she should ever go to a play again, will be more reasonable."

"Just so; we will go to the Vaudeville next time, and see Arnal," whispered Lord Morland to his niece.

"Instead of wasting our sensibilities on a parcel of Greeks and Romans," her ladyship continued, "in a world like this, where we

may every day expect to meet with real afflictions,—”

“Dear aunt, what afflictions?” asked Cecil; for Lady Morland’s foreboding tone made her fancy she had something particular in view.

“Husbands, my dear,” interposed her perverse uncle; “they are generally the first afflictions young ladies meet with: and it must be allowed that in most cases such afflictions are entirely of their own seeking.”

“My dear lord, Cecil had better go to bed,” said Lady Morland, severely: for even a poor joke like this was inadmissible on such a solemn topic. “There is very little to laugh at in the ordering of our lot; and as little to cry about, Cecil, in the forward nonsense that Ruth or Rachel, or whatever her name is, may have been ranting! Wicked creature! I suppose she was rouged up to the eyes! You will have a headach to-morrow of course!”

“Don’t,” exclaimed Lord Morland, “because I want you to go with me to the Louvre, and to

ride with me afterwards in the Bois de Boulogne.—Cis must have a habit, Lady Morland; and they will tell me at Meurice's where I can hire the best horses."

"You are at Meurice's, then?" said Lady Morland.

"Yes, not fifty yards off. I shall be with you early. On my word, you have very good rooms;—where do you perch, Cis? *Au cinquième?*"

"No, indeed, uncle; all our rooms are on the first floor. We are great people here. Come to breakfast, and let us be about all day."

It was towards the end of April, and the weather was delicious: as hot as July in England. The chestnut trees of the Tuileries had sprung into leaf and blossom, and the gardens were thronged with idlers. Cecil and her uncle used to spend hours loitering about, or sitting under the trees, Lord Morland talking readily to any one who happened to sit beside them;

which amused Cecil very much. Sometimes they would wander into the Place du Carousel, and see the troops exercised in the court of the Tuileries, as well as they could for the blaze of sunshine and steel helmets. They went to see the Gobelin tapestry, and thought it a very mysterious process, and came out in the most perfect ignorance of the whole proceeding ; having looked in vain upon a set of workmen doing something inconceivable with their slender Norman fingers among a profusion of wooden pegs and coloured wools outside a canvass suspended before them. They went to Père la Chaise, which disgusted them extremely ; and to the Jardin des Plantes, which pleased them better ; and to the Luxembourg, where there happened to be a flower-show, which was well worth seeing ; and to the chapel built to the memory of Louis XVI. and his queen : and there Cecil shed almost as many tears as she had done at the play, while reading the sublime passages engraved on the

pedestal of his statue, in which the king exhorts his son to forgive his enemies, if he should ever have the power to revenge his wrongs. And they went to see Arnal, as Lord Morland had threatened ; and they visited almost every church in Paris. Whenever she could entice her uncle into a church, Cecil was happy. She was present at a grand funeral in St Roche, and a wedding in Notre Dame, and a mass for a departed soul in the Madeleine ; where, the church being under some trifling repairs, the hammer and chisel of the workmen kept strange time with the chant of the Miserere.

But at this point Lady Morland interposed. It was very well to go to the play or the opera for those who liked such places, and who did not feel the sin of encouraging young women to paint their faces, like Jezebel—who, poor soul ! painted in a very different style from the modern ; but Cecil never should, with her consent, set her foot in those heathen churches,

where Cecil knew, and could not deny it, that they worshipped graven images to this day ; and, if she persisted in such conduct, her ladyship gave the company present to understand that she should break her heart.

At this crisis Lord Morland hastened to assure her ladyship that he would not for the world act against her convictions ; but that what she had imagined to be graven images at St Roche were merely painted on the wall, to imitate marble : although, he added, they had deceived a great many people. But it would not have been discreet to inquire too closely where he and Cecil *did* go the very next Sunday ; and Lady Morland perhaps thought so too, for she lost sight of them soon after breakfast ; and they did not come to light again till it was just time to dress for dinner.

It was a heavy day for Cecil when her uncle returned to England. She had to look forward to her uncle Ned's visits, and that was all ; for her uncle Morland confided to her that

he did not think he should cross the water again. He dreaded going back ; and if it was not for the Derby, he really thought he should remain always in Paris, rather than endure another such two hours at sea as he had suffered in coming over.

His daughters saw him go, as they had seen him come, with perfect tranquillity. Lady Morland was rather glad, for she never quite knew what he would do next. So Cecil had her tears all to herself ; for Laura was rejoicing in a splendid collection of bon-bons, which her uncle bestowed on her in parting, and which, perhaps, he would not have given her if he had staid.

The girls learned every known thing that was taught at Paris. Cecil was in great measure exempt from this drudgery ; for her uncle Ned, thinking that she looked thin the first time he paid them a visit, insisted that she should have no masters but of her own choosing ; and she confined herself to a piano and singing master.

It was, perhaps, fortunate for the girls that

Lady Morland made no acquaintance whatever among the French. She had never learned to speak that language, and she made no progress at all in it, during the time she resided in Paris.

Her best friends in England delighted to repeat some of her French quotations; which were quite equal to those of a famous railway lady, who used to exclaim to her parting acquaintance, "*Au reservoir.*" Lady Morland was known to have spoken of a young man whom she knew as a fine young *chaussure*, meaning *chasseur*. But when she got among "the natives," as she called them, she prudently dropped these expletives, and confined herself to her mother tongue: her own maid rendered her orders to the other servants, and Miss Penley performed the same good office towards her ladyship's tradespeople.

Lady Morland contented herself with what little society might be found among the few English residents irreproachable enough to be considered, with their children, perfectly safe

companions for her girls; and with such of her friends as might be either on a visit to Paris, or passing through to travel on the Continent.

All these looked up to her as the most devoted and careful of mothers, which she was. None of her friends left her without being deeply impressed with her skill and management.

“You’ll see she will marry those two girls of hers; and would if she had ten more!” were the terms in which their admiration reached its climax, and found vent in words: “Ay, and I should not wonder if she got them off even before their beautiful cousins; though they have something respectable in the way of fortune.”

What more affecting tribute could be paid to the sleepless cares of the best of parents?

It suited Lady Morland’s convenience, or rather her necessity, to remain abroad four years: at the end of that period, she was enabled to arrange her return. They were to go

back to Thornley in the autumn; and the following spring she determined to present Louisa and Cecil.

She looked forward with some excitement to the battle of the ensuing London season.

There was also a little skirmish that she was preparing for the autumn at Thornley: but of this she breathed not a word, even to her trusty counsellor uncle Ned.

She was very well satisfied with her materials.

It was not at all discouraging that Louisa was a little sallow insignificant person, without talents or graces of any kind: she rather liked it the better: there was more credit in marrying a girl like that.

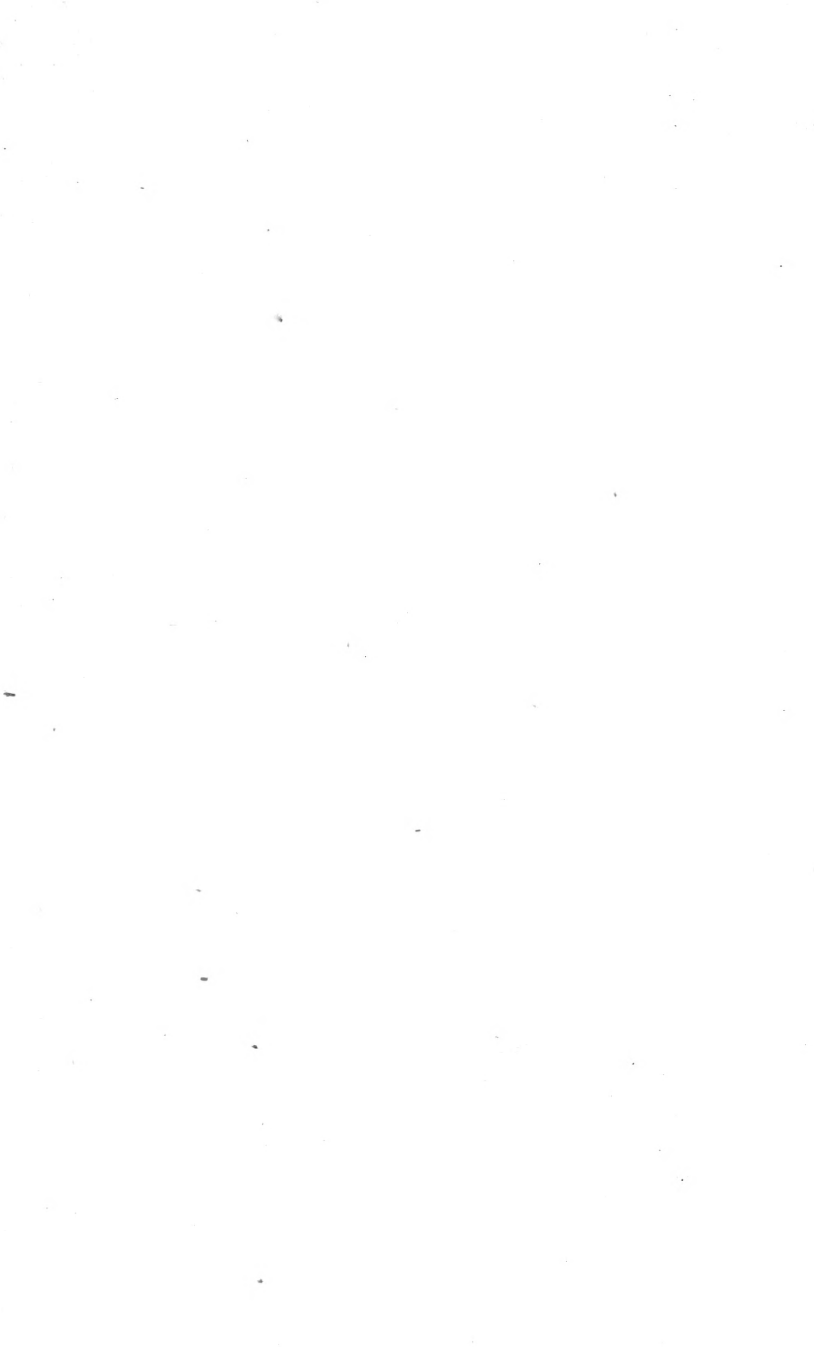
“I can make most people believe that Lou is a beauty,” she soliloquized, “by merely asserting it, as if it were a self-evident fact. With regard to Henrietta, I fear I must fall back upon the virtues for her recommendation; which I know enough of men to be aware is a far less efficient letter of credit: she must learn to knit

worsted stockings, and keep the accounts of the Thornley Coal Club. But shoo! (*chut!*) as the girls say, let me remember that excellent Arabian proverb—

“SILVER SPEECH—GOLDEN SILENCE!”

END OF VOL. I.

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